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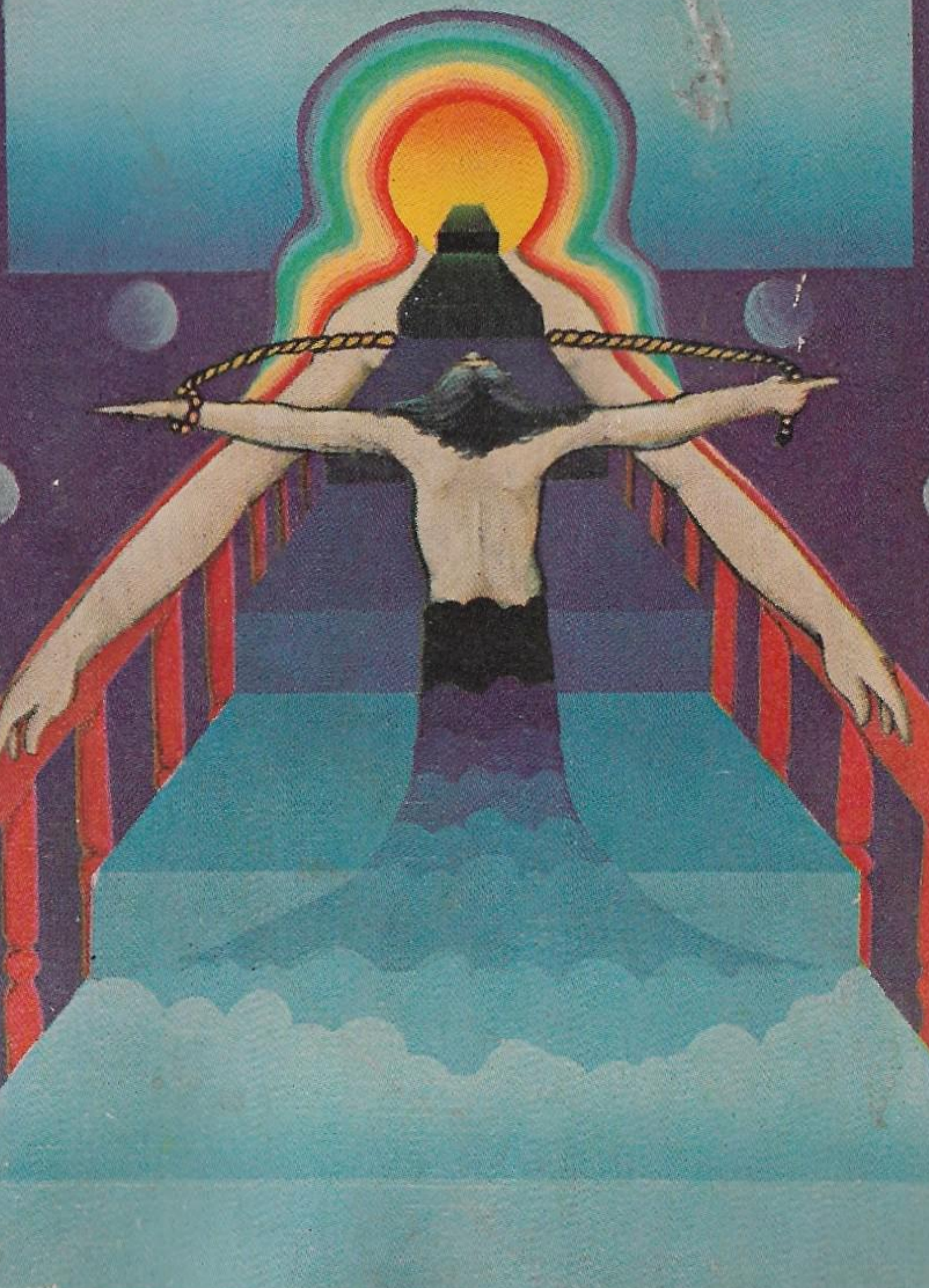
MORE STRANGE UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

BY EMILE SCHURMACHER

True experiences in the occult that defy the imagination — and the best minds of modern science!



TAKE A GUIDED TOUR INTO THE OCCULT—
THE UNCHARTED NIGHTSIDE
OF HUMAN LIFE—

MORE STRANGE UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

by Emile C. Schurmacher

A newsman who has covered stories on four continents for three decades, Emile Schurmacher is professionally trained in skeptical objectivity. But some events baffle the scrutiny of science—and in this fascinating book Mr. Schurmacher presents such cases as

* The Miracle Of Saxsewell Mine
* The Specter Of The Truro Dunes
* The UN's Visitor From Outer Space
* Skipper Johansen's One-Chance-In-A-Million Hunch

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MORE STRANGE UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

BY EMILE SCHURMACHER

PAPERBACK LIBRARY

New York

PAPERBACK LIBRARY EDITION
First Printing: December, 1969

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INTRODUCTION

We live in a computerized age. Today everything must be measured, weighed, analyzed and defined to be accepted as reality.

More and more we tend to confuse brilliant scientific achievements and impressive technological progress as the ultimate advancement in human knowledge.

Modern living, predicted on the flick of a switch, a press on a button, the turn of a dial, is making it more and more difficult to accept any apparent manifestation of the supernormal or supernatural as genuine.

This skepticism, if not outright disbelief, extends to the Diety. In the recent past a comparatively small minority drew strong disapproval by declaring: "There is no God." Today it is a cliche for sophisticates, in increasing numbers, to say, "God is dead."

It is not necessary to believe in God or the Devil, in miracles or psychic phenomena, to recognize the fact that every day strange and mysterious events and manifestations do occur which science cannot explain nor human knowledge fathom.

All too often, however, these happenings are dismissed as "coincidences" or "illusions"—or branded as outright hoaxes.

Unidentified Flying Objects present a pertinent, continuous example. For years UFOs, or flying saucers, have been observed in virtually every part of the world. They have been the center of controversy ever since June 24, 1947, when Kenneth Arnold, a reputable citizen as well as competent private pilot, spotted nine disc-shaped objects flying in single-file formation like geese above the mountain peaks in the vicinity of Mount Rainier, Washington.

In the course of numerous sightings that followed, both in the United States and elsewhere on the globe, many eminent scientists emphatically pronounced UFOs to be either illusions or frauds. Another group of scientists, equally eminent, and just as emphatically, insisted that they were real.

The United States Air Force became a participant in the controversy. In fact it became a focal point. After

repeated accusations that it was withholding important information about UFOs from the public, the USAF sponsored what was supposed to be a thorough and conclusive investigation.

Approximately half a million dollars were appropriated for this investigation which was to be headquartered at the University of Colorado. A panel of scientists, experts and technicians was organized headed by Dr. Edward U. Condon, former head of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Physical Society and the National Bureau of Standards.

In January 1969, following eighteen months of investigation, research and study, Dr. Condon and his colleagues issued their report. After hundreds of UFO probes they found that "a number of episodes previously classed as inexplicable could be accounted for by natural means or hoaxes."

They added that a larger-scale effort "to determine the nature of flying saucers would be a project that would be a waste of time and money."

By its own admission the panel did not make a *complete* investigation.

In one of the following chapters there is a detailed account of a UFO which was seen hovering above the UN Building in the very heart of New York City on the afternoon of November 23, 1966. It was plainly observed by hundreds of persons, clearly described, flight course reported.

If the object was not a UFO, then what was the mysterious force or power that created a mass illusion for hundreds of persons who were engaged in their usual activities? Certainly the majority of these eye-witnesses had no thoughts of UFOs in mind prior to the sighting.

If the scientists "solved" one mystery, they immediately created another.

Consider some other kinds of inexplicable mysteries. Miracles, for instance, supposedly do not occur. Especially in this day and age.

On the tragic day of May 24, 1968, Larry Lynch and five other West Virginia miners were a small group in a shift of twenty-four men trapped two hundred and fifty feet below ground in Saxsewell Mine No. 8. They were two miles from the mine shaft, doomed by drowning, suffoca-

tion, explosion or hunger. Larry Lynch prayed for a miracle. He and the five others were rescued after their desperate plight was thought hopeless.

Paratrooper Stanley A. Melczak did not have time to pray for a miracle when he jumped out of a Flying Boxcar during Arctic maneuvers and his parachute failed to open. Pvt. Melczak plunged a thousand feet to the ground—and lived. If a miracle is an unacceptable explanation to realists, what is?

One of the least explored areas of psychic mystery is reincarnation. Although it has its devout believers, most of them are becoming increasingly reluctant to discuss their belief publicly lest they be regarded as crackpots in this matter-of-fact world.

Diane Loreaux, who was born on a farm in Nevers, France, in 1949, offers a case in point. Diane, who has never been out of her native country did not even suspect that she might be the reincarnation of a nineteenth century girl named Margot Lyons whose authenticated history included capture by a tribe of cannibals on the South Pacific island of New Ireland. It was one of Diane's art teachers at the Sorbonne, Professor Paul Audel, who first suspected that she was the reincarnation of Margot and persuaded her to permit examination by psychologists and psychiatrists.

Scientists and engineers can readily explain the most intricate operation of complicated electronic apparatus and equipment. Paradoxically, they do not know why ordinary metal coat hangers used by amateur G.I. "dowsers" in Vietnam have successfully detected buried enemy mines, booby traps, and hidden ammunition dumps.

Lacking conclusive proof, some types of enigmatic phenomena are attributed to legend, myth or superstitious folklore. The Abominable Snowman or Yeti is in this category.

Every once in a while one of these giant humanoids is supposedly sighted in the Himalayas and there the story ends. There has never been any definite evidence as to whether or not Abominable Snowmen exist. After all, the Himalayas are in one of the most remote regions of the globe and reports about them are probably only rumors.

But what about the Sasquatch or "Big Foot," the

elusive apelike monster of the American and Canadian Northwest? Is this hairy humanoid to be summarily dismissed as legend too? For centuries Indians have reported sightings. Many references are to be found in the diaries and journals of early white settlers in the region. From time to time hunters and loggers find giant footprints. Occasionally the giant creatures, whatever they are, continue to be sighted.

In the vast area of psychic phenomena that challenges investigation, communication with the dead has long defied explanation. Granted that there are charlatans, self-ordained spiritualists and various brands of mystics and mediums who can supposedly communicate with the dead. Are they all to be labeled frauds or categorized as victims of their own delusions?

Many are unquestionably sincere in their convictions if not their proof—as, for example, the Rev. James A. Pike, resigned bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California who in September 1967 attracted widespread attention by holding a televised seance with his dead son, Jim.

Ghosts and apparitions likewise have long been a mystifying and often ridiculed facet of psychic phenomena. Hauntings are usually associated with ancient castles; with lonely, abandoned houses; with places where murders were committed or persons died in bizarre circumstances.

Hallucinations encouraged or induced by sinister surroundings? How, then, does one explain "sight reports" of apparitions in urban dwellings, even in hotel rooms?

Finally, and much more frequently is the unexplained phenomena we experience in our own daily lives. Usually we shrug off a mystifying occurrence as a "coincidence." If it is really impressive it becomes an "incredible coincidence."

As a newsman who has covered stories on four continents for three decades I have always tried to maintain my objectivity. This discipline in remaining factual was the basic guideline in an earlier book, *Strange Unsolved Mysteries*—as it is in this one. I hold no brief either for or against the existence of supernormal or supernatural forces, but many events have made me wonder.

I hope to communicate that sense of wonder to you in this book.

Chapter One

MIRACLE OF SAXSEWELL MINE NO. 8

In the tiny hamlet of Hominy Falls, West Virginia, the fateful morning of May 24, 1968, began like any other working day in the life of twenty-eight-year-old Larry Lynch and his twenty-four fellow miners in the first shift at Saxsewell Mine No. 8.

At seven a.m. they were lowered two hundred and fifty feet below the surface. Here, near the head of the shaft, foreman Frank Davis remained with fourteen of the men. The rest, including Lynch, got into small coal carts for a two-mile ride through the dank darkness of a tunnel no larger than three feet in circumference.

The end of the tunnel opened into a 90-by-140-foot tomb-like area. Here a mechanical drill had been set up against the far wall. It was manned by a crew of four, who used it to hammer chunks out of the wall. Behind them Lynch and five other men loaded the coal into the cars.

At nine forty-five the drill crew suddenly punched a hole through the far wall. The men were shocked to discover that it led to a flooded, long abandoned mine which their underground survey map had indicated was a safe two hundred feet beyond the blind wall.

Water gushed through the opening, quickly enlarging it. Large chunks of rock and coal began falling on the drill crew. They shouted in horrified alarm and tried to run. Before they took two paces the wall crumpled, crushing all four men to death.

A raging torrent poured out of the abandoned mine and descended upon the six loaders. They scrambled to the highest spot in the area where they were working. With the yellow mine water swirling beneath their feet they frantically began to construct a barricade of shoring timber and heavy burlap to protect themselves from the rising flood, the foul air and the deadly gases.

Sweeping beneath them with the violence of a subterranean tidal wave, the released water cut off any hope of escape and coursed on for the entire length of the

tunnel. Reaching the shaft head, it raced toward the fifteen men, trapping them on a narrow ledge.

At the far end of the tunnel the water by now was lapping at the feet of the six loaders. A few minutes more and the crest reached their ankles.

They watched the relentless approach of doom and one of them muttered in despair, "Only a little while longer . . ."

Lynch dropped to his knees. "Dear God," he prayed aloud. "You can work miracles. I'm asking you for one now."

For a moment there was silence except for the sound of water. Then suddenly a miner shouted, "The water has stopped rising!"

And from then on it did not rise another inch.

Two miles further on, near the shaft head, Foreman Davis and his fourteen men huddled on their ledge, waiting and praying for rescue. On the surface above them a rescue crew had quickly responded to the first clanging alarm and men were rigging machinery to bore down to the shaft head after discovering that water blocked entrance by way of the main shaft.

It proved to be a formidable task. For five days and nights they bored and dug into frustrating rock and hardpan before breaking into the horizontal shaft two hundred and fifty feet below. One by one the fifteen entombed miners were brought to the surface on a conveyor belt to be met by mine officials and anxiously waiting families.

Foreman Davis was the last to emerge. He shook his head grimly and tears came to his bloodshot eyes when he was asked about the ten miners at the far end of the tunnel.

"No chance, no chance," he repeated sadly until members of the ten families still keeping their long vigil returned grief-stricken to their homes.

Night came on and the tired rescue crew remained on the job. Although hope had been abandoned for any more survivors, there was still work to be done. The tunnel had to be pumped out, the ten bodies brought to the surface for burial.

The rescue crew had no way of knowing that in the darkness far below there were six survivors. Waiting.

After the water stopped rising they found that three of their lunch boxes had not been swept away. They pooled the food and by careful rationing managed to make it last for three days. When it was gone their only sustenance was the yellow, foul-smelling mine water.

Despite their desperate plight they never abandoned hope. Larry Lynch kept on declaring resolutely, "God worked a miracle when He stopped the water from rising. He will surely work another."

It seemed to the six that an eternity passed before they saw a faint glow of light in the tunnel—a miner's headlight. The glow became brighter and then a voice called out to them. The rescue team was approaching through the muck and muddy water remaining in the tunnel.

The six survivors were hoisted to the surface where they were greeted as if they had returned from the dead. After they were blanketed and given hot coffee they were examined by a physician.

"Incredible!" he told mine officials. "After all they've gone through they are suffering only dysentery and have a few scratches. It almost seems like a miracle."

Chapter Two

SPECTER OF THE TRURO DUNES

Among those who say that the specter of Lawrence Madigan stalks the lonely dunes of Truro seeking his deranged widow, none have firmer convictions about his nocturnal prowling than Clinton Evanders, a young Newark, New Jersey, free-lance commercial artist, and his wife, Sally, who rented the long vacant Madigan cottage in the summer of 1967.

The Madigans, members of an old Bostonian family, were summer residents of Cape Cod. They were a devoted couple, Lawrence, a strapping six-footer in his forties; his wife, Lynn, a petite brunette, about five years his junior.

On a blustery morning in July 1957, although gale warnings had been posted from Block Island to Cape Hatteras, Madigan decided to go swimming while Lynn was off on a shopping excursion in Provincetown.

He plunged into the roiling surf and, a hundred yards from shore, discovered that the treacherous undertow was much stronger than he had ever encountered before. There was no one else in the water, no one in sight on the lonely beach. He fought until his strength was exhausted and he was carried out to sea.

Lynn returned at noon and found a brief note from her husband informing her he had gone swimming and would be back at lunch time.

At first she was not worried, but as time passed her anxiety grew. At two o'clock, when he failed to appear she phoned her nearest neighbors, the Jim Wilsons, a quarter of a mile away. She and the Wilsons searched the beach and were joined by several residents of Truro. They hunted for Lawrence Madigan until nightfall but found no trace of him.

Lynn refused to believe that her husband had been drowned. At dawn on the following morning she resumed the hunt for him alone, walking along the shore until darkness set in.

The next morning she began a tearful vigil on the beach, and the next, and the day after.

At daybreak on the fourth morning when she came to the beach she found the corpse of Madigan. It had been washed up by the tide sometime during the night together with large clumps of seaweed strewn along the shore. Several strands of seaweed were tangled around his head, his body and his limbs.

Lynn was numb with grief. The only thing she could think of was to carry the body several hundred yards to the cottage. It was much too heavy for her to lift and she tried in vain to drag it.

She needed help. Instead of going to the cottage and using the telephone she ran frantically along the shore to the Wilson house.

About twenty-five minutes elapsed before she returned with Jim Wilson in his beach buggy. He drove to the spot where she had found the corpse. The clumps of seaweed

were there, but there was no sign of a body.

Lynn was stunned, incredulous.

"Are you sure you saw Larry?" Jim Wilson asked gently. "Some of these bunches of seaweed are pretty big. Perhaps you mistook one of them for Larry."

"No," she insisted tearfully. "It was Larry. I touched him, tried to move him, but he was too heavy. Perhaps the tide carried him out to sea again when I went to get you."

Wilson shook his head and pointed. "The tide is receding. You can see the water is several feet from the seaweed."

"But I saw Larry's body," Lynn repeated in a stunned voice. "I touched it . . ."

Wilson remained silent. It was understandable, he reflected, that in her condition she was imagining things.

On the following morning Lynn continued her vigil. She kept it up until members of her family came to Cape Cod and took her back to Boston. She never recovered from the shock.

She was still in a mental institution ten years later when the Clinton Evanders arrived on the scene and rented the Madigan cottage from a local real estate agent.

There was an air of melancholy neglect about the once charming little cottage. The windows were boarded up, the lock of the door was broken and the door swung ajar on creaky hinges. Windblown sand covered the floor and formed a fine layer upon the moldy smelling furniture.

Nevertheless Clinton and Sally were happy to have found the cottage. They had traveled the entire length of the Cape from Falmouth to Provincetown, visited every village, only to hear the same disappointing news. A summer rental? Sorry, but there is absolutely nothing more available for the rest of the season.

They moved into the cottage early in July and spent a busy week putting it in order. They unboarded the windows, cleaned the rooms, and Clinton, who was handy with tools, made several small repairs.

It wasn't until he replaced the lock on the door with a new one he purchased in Truro that he noticed something strange.

On the following morning the front door was ajar and he eyed it in puzzlement.

"You know I could swear I closed and locked the door last night," he said. "I must be getting absent-minded."

Sally made no comment. She seemed to be in a preoccupied mood during breakfast. When Clinton asked her if anything was wrong she told him she'd had a disturbing dream.

"It was about a tall man in swim trunks. He was dripping wet as though he'd just come out of the water and there were strands of seaweed clinging to his body. He walked to the foot of the bed and stood there staring at me for a long time before leaving the bedroom. The dream was so real it frightened me."

That night Sally had the same dream. When Clinton got up in the morning he again found the front door ajar.

He inspected the lock and shook his head, baffled.

"I can't understand it," he said. "I'm *sure* I locked the door before we went to bed last night."

"Clint," she said hesitantly. "I know this sounds silly but do you think it was a ghost?"

"Nonsense. There's no such thing as a ghost. There must be a perfectly logical explanation."

"I'm sure there must be. Only I've heard a story in the village about the man who owned this cottage. They say that after his wife was taken back to Boston he came back from the ocean, hunting her. That Madigan's specter still roams the beach and the cottage and the surrounding dunes—searching."

"One of those local legends that someone creates and grows through the years," Clinton said and added reassuringly, "I'll put a bolt on the door in addition to the lock. Pick one up in the hardware store when you go to the village."

Sally went shopping in Truro in the afternoon. She was gone longer than usual.

"I dropped in on the Wilsons on the way home," she explained. "They were familiar with the legend, but they told me that in the ten years since Madigan was drowned neither of them have seen his ghost."

"What did I tell you? Just one of those stories."

"There's more," Sally added soberly. "When I asked

them to describe Lawrence Madigan they showed me an old snapshot of a man in swim trunks. He looked exactly like the man I've been seeing in my dreams."

"You just imagine it."

"Like we imagine we've been finding the front door unlocked and partly open in the morning?"

Clinton didn't answer. He installed the bolt on the door. Before going to bed he locked and bolted the door.

Sometime after they fell asleep Sally heard a man's voice calling out: "Lynn. Lynn dear."

She sat up in bed and saw a man in swim trunks entering the room. He approached to the foot of the bed.

"Lynn—" He was staring at her fixedly. "You are not my Lynn!" he said sadly and then silently left the room.

It took Sally several seconds to compose herself. She woke up her husband and told him what she had seen and heard.

"You've been dreaming again."

"I wasn't dreaming." Her voice trembled. "He spoke to me. At first he thought I was his wife."

Clinton jumped out of bed and went to the front door. It stood ajar. Both bolt and lock were intact. But there was something that startled him even more.

"Look there!" he said to Sally, who had followed him, and pointed to the floor.

Just inside the entrance, as if someone wet had stood there, was a small puddle of water—and several strands of seaweed.

It was the last time that Clinton found the door unlocked and partly open, the last time Sally's sleep was disturbed by the specter of Lawrence Madigan.

"Perhaps it was because Madigan's ghost was finally convinced that his wife was not to be found in the cottage," says Clinton solemnly. "I can offer no other explanation."

Chapter Three

PHENOMENON OF THE DOWSING COAT HANGERS

Led by Sgt. Johnny Davis, a patrol of U.S. Fifth Infantry Tunnel Rats advanced cautiously through the treacherous underbrush of heavily mined and booby-trapped Ho Bo woods north of Saigon.

For months this sixty-square-mile area of the "Iron Triangle" had been a stronghold of the Viet Cong, from which the enemy launched deadly sneak mortar attacks on U.S. airfields and hit-and-run rocket bombardments.

Now, probing for underground fortifications and arms depots, the Tunnel Rats were armed with specialized weapons for close-quarter combat, including silencer-equipped .38 revolvers, sawed-off shotguns, knives, garroting wires and CN gas grenades.

Sgt. Davis was using a curious gadget, two ordinary metal coat hangers bent into L shapes. He held one in each hand, parallel and directly forward from his chest.

Suddenly he felt his arms parting and he came to an abrupt halt. An invisible force seemed to be pulling the coat hangers apart to an angle of one hundred and eighty degrees.

Dropping to his knees he scooped delicately at the earth with a toughened hand. He soon uncovered a bamboo slat laid lengthwise across a squarish hollow.

"Cartridge trap!"

Now, more certain of what he'd find, he dug with both hands. The trap, as lethal as it was crude, consisted of a wooden board through which a nail had been driven upward. Fixed directly above the nail, also pointing upward and held in position by a sliver of bamboo on either side, was a rifle cartridge. Anyone stepping on the slat would press down on the cartridge. The nail would function as a firing pin and shoot the bullet into a victim's body.

Davis removed the cartridge, warily edged forward and uncovered three more slats with similarly rigged bullets.

"Cruddy bastards," he muttered.

The Viet Cong who had constructed the booby traps weren't gambling that the one bullet would maim or kill. They had so arranged the others that if the victim missed one he would fire another and when he fell his weight would shoot others into his body.

Raising the coat hangers in front of his chest again, Davis ordered his patrol to wait and resumed his cautious advance. He took several paces and halted when the invisible force parted his arms again.

This time the Tunnel Rats did not encounter a booby-trap prepared for them. They uncovered a cunningly concealed shaft opening and when they probed it they found that it led to an underground arms depot in which the Viet Cong had stored a quantity of rocket launchers, light machine guns, Claymore-type mines, rifles, pistols and ammunition.

During these clearing operations in the Iron Triangle, a long and hazardous assignment called Operation Cedar Falls, Davis' patrols and a number of other Tunnel Rat details used coat hanger divining rods with considerable effectiveness.

"They often worked where a complex battery-powered mine detector failed," U.S. Military Intelligence headquarters in Saigon acknowledged, "although we could not ascertain the reason why."

The use of a divining rod for discovering something hidden in the ground is ancient and dowsers supposedly are endowed with a special if not mystic talent.

Contrary to general belief the earliest dowsers were not searching for water. They were miners in the Harz mountain region of Germany who, in the fifteenth century, sought minerals with what they called a *schlagruthe,* a striking rod, made of a forked branch.

Later, in Queen Elizabeth I's time, a number of German miners were recruited by the British to work in the mines of Cornwall and they introduced the divining rod in England.

Still later, they began to use forked twigs of hazel, beech, holly or willow to dowse for water.

Tunnel Rats who used coat hangers for dowsing in Viet Nam not only did not possess any special powers but many of them frankly admitted that they were skeptical

at first, then astounded when the gadgets actually worked.

The idea apparently originated with Louis J. Matacia of Falls Church, an operations analyst at the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, Va. After many successful experiments he suggested that his method be tried for locating enemy tunnels, stores of arms and ammunition and other objects hidden underground.

"I have talked to physicists in the Defense Department and at Johns Hopkins," he reported. "Neither can tell me why it works. The Intelligence Department at Quantico is trying to find out why it works; they cannot find an answer at all."

Some of the military disparaged Matacia's discovery as "superstition," others expressed skepticism. A few were interested, however, and decided to investigate "coat hanger dowsing."

Among them was Major Nelson Hardacker, commanding officer of the Thirteenth Engineer Battalion of the Fifth Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, Calif. Using the unique device instead of a modern mine detector, the major walked slowly across the camp grounds.

When he came to the "Viet Nam trail," an area of thick undergrowth with tunnels and simulated booby traps used in Marine training for jungle combat, the coat hangers he held were forcefully and invisibly parted. Several feet beneath the ground was a tunnel.

"The tunnel runs in the direction shown by the wires," Major Hardacker exclaimed.

He also discovered that when he neared barbed wire the hangers spread apart. Over a sloping tunnel one hanger pointed downward in the direction of the tunnel slope. On approaching close to a simulated mine the hangers spread apart and pointed downward. Later he found he could employ the device to locate underground water and sewage pipes.

A Marine lieutenant colonel who achieved the same results was so impressed that he took several coat hanger "dowsing rods" along when he left Camp Pendleton for Saigon.

In Viet Nam, after being used in combat operations by the Tunnel Rats, the device was adopted—strictly unofficially—by many G.I. and Marine patrols when they probed enemy terrain.

No one really knows why it works. One explanation for the "invisible force" activating dowsing rods has been offered by the British scientist, Sir W. F. Barrett. He suggested that the dowser's power might lie beneath the level of conscious perception.

He described this as "motor-automatism," a reflex action excited by some stimulus upon the dowser's mind.

Although U.S. military officers in Viet Nam did not regard this as an adequate explanation it is the best which science can as yet offer for the phenomenon of the dowsing coat hangers.

Chapter Four

THE UN'S VISITOR FROM OUTER SPACE

It is not correct to say that Secretary-General U Thant personally believes in the existence of UFOs. I hope this makes the position clear . . .

From a letter to the author by C. V. Narasimhan, Secretary-General U Thant's Chef de Cabinet.

At 4:20 P.M., on the bright, sunny afternoon of November 22, 1966, a large rectangular, cushion-shaped object appeared several hundred feet above the East River, in New York City, flying rapidly southward.

Decreasing speed on approaching the UN complex, this Unidentified Flying Object hovered directly over the tall UN office building for several minutes, bobbing up and down like a ship on a choppy sea. Then it climbed swiftly upward on a northeasterly course and soon disappeared.

There were hundreds of credible eye witnesses to this mysterious UFO visitation. Among them were eight employees of ANPA, the American Newspaper Publishers Association, who observed it from windows on the seventeenth floor of nearby 750 Third Avenue; persons in the UN offices and other buildings in the proximity, and pedestrians in the UN plaza.

What was the UFO doing above the UN building? Was it trying to communicate with someone within—possibly with Secretary-General U Thant himself?

For years one of the strongest arguments advanced by UFO debunkers and disparagers has been that unidentified flying objects usually are sighted in remote areas by obscure individuals who possess no scientific background or any official standing. The implication is either that such observers are publicity seekers or are "seeing things" such as meteors, vapor trails, haloes, clouds or weather balloons.

Another stock argument by skeptics and disbelievers is that if humanoids have the intelligence to construct and navigate a space vehicle which can transport them millions of miles on a precise course to Earth they will not, as supposedly has happened, buzz a motorist on a rural highway in Massachusetts, terrify a sheepherder on a New Mexico mesa, or try to establish contact with a sharecropper in a Louisiana cotton field.

Instead, the humanoid visitors from another planet would land their space vehicle near a well-populated area and endeavor to contact a prominent official or authority whose reliability would not be subjected to question.

Many UFO proponents believe this is what occurred when the mysterious object was sighted above the UN building; that it was a space vehicle with humanoid occupants who tried to contact UN officials—and were unsuccessful.

They point out that if the UFO *was* an extraterrestrial vehicle, humanoids could not have demonstrated their wish to communicate with Earth people more appropriately than by hovering over the UN, tenanted by representatives of nations throughout the world.

Reports of the mysterious visitation could not have failed to come to the attention of both the Secretary-General and the UN Outer Space Affairs Group. But no public statement was ever issued by either U Thant or his Group.

When questioned by the author, Marvin Robinson, Scientific Secretary of the Group replied that it ". . . has never discussed the subject of Unidentified Flying Objects nor requested any study or report on this subject."

Among many eminent scientists who were concerned and puzzled by the failure of the UN and the U.S. Air Force to offer any explanation for the visitation was Dr. James E. McDonald, one of the world's most renowned authorities on Unidentified Flying Objects, senior physicist in the Institute of Atmospheric Physics and professor in the Department of Meteorology, University of Arizona.

Following the appearance of the mysterious visitor, Dr. McDonald telephoned the offices of the American Newspaper Publishers Association and spoke at some length to Mr. W. H. Leick, manager of the publications department. Said Dr. McDonald:

"Leick confirmed that eight or nine persons were out on the seventeenth floor terrace watching the object hover over the UN building for a number of minutes as it rocked and reflected the sun's rays with a golden glint before rising and moving off.

"I asked Leick if they reported it to any Air Force channels, and he said that Mr. A. A. LaSalle called a New York office of the Air Force and was assured that an officer would be in the next day to interview them. But no one ever came.

"This is indicative of the diligence with which the Air Force is seeking out the last bit of evidence about UFOs. Over a half dozen responsible witnesses see an unconventional object hover over midtown Manhattan, they tell the Air Force, and it yawns!

"Leick added that they also phoned a New York newspaper 'which shall go unnamed' but they weren't interested. The report got to NICAP, National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, almost by accident, and NICAP sent their standard witness-questionnaires which Leick said they all filled out as carefully as they could.

"If this were an isolated instance it might be amusing; it is all too typical, unfortunately. So I don't see the earmarks of a frantic race against time to secretly solve the enigma of the UFOs.

"If my view is wrong, if there *is* a high level coverup, then I am going to be one of a very large number of scientists, both within this country and outside it, who are going to want to hear some fast explaining as to how a

scientific problem of the potential interest of the UFO problem could be regarded as the legitimate domain of deception-operations unparallelled in previous history. But, to repeat, I just *don't* believe there have been such operations."

Almost seven months were to pass before Dr. McDonald had the opportunity personally to express his views to the UN. On June 7, 1967, he addressed the UN's Outer Space Affairs Group. Secretary-General U Thant was not present. At the time he was preoccupied with a meeting of the Security Council. He did, however, receive an advance copy of Dr. McDonald's report, together with a communication in which the scientist stressed the need for *immediate* UN global action on the UFO enigma.

This, verbatim, is the little-publicized report, a copy of which Dr. McDonald gave to the author:

"I believe that a serious and determined effort on the part of the United Nations to assemble information on the problem and to encourage immediate scientific attention to the problem among all member Nations would be a substantial step towards removing the 'ridicule lid' that is now so powerfully suppressing public reporting of any UFO sightings. Many other UN actions could and should be taken to escalate world scientific concern for the UFO problem.

"I believe that very serious consideration must be given to the hypothesis that these unconventional objects constitute some form of extraterrestrial probes.

"Until I undertook personal study of the problem I was not able to give credence to such a hypothesis. After a year's intensive study I must still regard it as only a hypothesis, but I must emphasize that my findings drive me strongly toward the view that this may be the only presently acceptable hypothesis to account for the quite astonishing number of credibly reported low-level, close-range sightings of machine-like objects that are now on record from all over the world.

"I wish to offer whatever personal assistance or counsel you or your colleagues might be able to draw from my own experience in studying this problem. The United Nations has, I believe, both responsibilities and obligations

to accelerate serious scientific study of the UFO problem throughout the world.

"To many serious students of the UFO phenomena, it appears conceivable that something in the nature of a global surveillance by UFOs has been under way in recent years.

"If there is even a remote chance that this view is correct, then our present ignorance of the purpose and plan of such surveillance must be speedily replaced by maximal understanding of what is going on.

"If the entire phenomenon is of some other nature, we need to know this.

"Present ignorance, present neglect, present ridicule, all constitute regrettable features of our collective attitudes towards what may be a matter of urgent importance to all peoples of the world. United Nations' scrutiny of these matters is, in my opinion, urgently needed."

Supporting Dr. McDonald's contentions, on a global basis, there have been hundreds of authenticated reports of UFO sightings. To detail briefly only a few:

South Africa: Shortly after midnight, Sept. 16, 1965, a "flying disc" landed on a Pretoria highway. It was observed at close range from their patrol car by Constables John Lockem and Koos de Klerk. They described it as about thirty feet in diameter, with a copper-colored surface and a luminous glow. It took off again with tongues of flame spurting from two tubes beneath. They burned holes in the macadam surface of the road.

Lt. Col. J. B. Brits, District Commandant of Pretoria North declared that the severity of road damage could not have been caused by gasoline or other common fuel. He also acknowledged that the government was gravely concerned.

Peru: On the night of December 29, 1966, a DC-8, Canadian Pacific Airlines Flight 421, piloted by Capt. Robert Millbank, encountered a UFO while enroute from Lima to Mexico City.

This occurred on the Peruvian coast at an altitude of thirty-five-thousand feet on a clear night with a full moon. The UFO's shape was indistinct and had "a string of yellow lights on the edge between two large lights." The UFO took up a position beside the left wing of the air-

liner and accompanied it for approximately two minutes before emitting a rocketlike shower of fire and speeding off in the opposite direction. It remained visible to pilot, crew and passengers for a total of seven minutes.

Australia: On the night of May 3, 1964, a number of ground eye-witnesses in Canberra observed a small UFO with a red light flying in a northeast direction. Suddenly a much larger UFO was sighted moving swiftly toward it. The second UFO was described as "white-glowing with a peculiar wobble as though losing power or partly out of control."

It overtook the smaller UFO and appeared to strike it. "Then it turned, no longer wobbling and streaked out of sight. The small red light sputtered briefly and then went out."

From the behavior of the two UFOs watchers believed that they had witnessed some sort of rapid refueling or recharging process. This occurrence was investigated by Dr. Paul Siple, Scientific Attaché of the U. S. Embassy and two NASA engineers. They concluded that the UFOs were neither manmade nor earth based.

Their report was officially transmitted to our CIA and National Security Agency coded as "Airgram A-894." Details of the report have been tabbed as restricted information ever since.

Belgium: On the afternoon of December 6, 1966, a greenish-colored oval-shaped UFO, approximately thirty feet in length, was sighted by a number of train passengers in the vicinity of Drachten. It paced the train for about six minutes emitting a whistling noise which could be distinctly heard. It then rose, accelerated rapidly and disappeared in the direction of Holland.

Japan: On the evening of March 18, 1965, a TOA Airlines Convair 240 was flying over the Shikoku area piloted by Capt. Yashika Inaba with Tetsu Umashima as co-pilot.

"We were flying at six thousand feet at 7 p.m. when this strange object appeared," Inaba testified to Japanese aviation authorities.

"It disrupted normal operation of the automatic-direction finder and cut off radio communication with nearby landing fields.

"The object followed us for a while and then stopped and hovered behind us for about three minutes. Then it started again, overtook us and followed along our left wing for about fifty-five miles until we reached Matsuyama. After this it disappeared."

On approaching Matsuyama the UFO was also sighted by observers on the ground and by another pilot, Joji Negishi, in a Cherokee 140.

England: On September 12, 1965, Major William Hill was driving along a country road at Calloway Clump near Warminster. Rounding a curve he was startled to find the road blocked by a UFO.

Hill is not the sort of man who either startles easily or yields to nerves. He is a veteran who fought in the British Army both in Europe and the Middle East during World War Two. He reported:

"For the first time in my life I felt quite unnerved by something of an unknown quantity. I sat in my car quite frankly shaken. My car started to jump and jolt violently up and down with its wheels leaving the ground.

"I sensed something fantastic and oddly sinister in the air. It was like the sounds of high-powered refrigerating or deep-freeze units. Then the vibrations lessened and the car gently swayed. After approximately three minutes the UFO rose high in the sky and disappeared. I then pressed the starter button of my car and it purred away perfectly."

The Antarctic: On July 9, 1965, a UFO which flew over the Chilean weather station was observed by meteorologists and technicians. Scientist Mario Jan Barrera, in command of the base, reported to the Chilean Defense Ministry:

"The UFO was lens-shaped, maneuvering at great speed. It gave off a blue-green sheen. It caused interference in the electro-magnetic apparatus of the Argentine base which faces ours on a nearby island.

"It would zigzag quickly. Then it stopped, and we would promptly reach for field glasses, telescopes, anything at hand to sight it plainly. We watched it remain quietly there for about twenty minutes.

"I can say that it was not a star, because its movement was rapid and continuous. As to its being an aircraft

(Barrera had been in the Chilean Air Force), from what I know about aircraft, there is nothing like it, because of its shape, speed and maneuverability."

Venezuela: On the afternoon of July 28, 1965, three UFOs, saucer-shaped and about twenty-five feet in circumference were tracked on the screen of radar operator Carlos Matanzas at Gran de Oro Airport. They flew toward the airport in a group and hovered directly above the main runway for several minutes, observed by ground personnel.

Brazil: Dr. Olavo T. Fontes, professor at the National School of Medicine and Brazil's leading investigator of UFOs, has publicly stated:

"Too many thousands of people have seen these objects at close range in our country over the last sixteen years and there have been many dramatic incidents—including a number of brief landings, power failures, directly attributed to the presence of these objects, and cases in which people have had to be hospitalized after suffering burns and other injuries apparently caused by these things."

These are but a few of the many global visitations which, like the mysterious object that appeared directly over the UN building in New York City, would seem to merit UN consideration and investigation.

Although diversified in size, shape, color, and circumstance of appearance and sighting, they all have three factors in common.

First, they were observed at close range. Second, the eyewitnesses were normal persons who, at the time, were engaged in normal, everyday activities. Third, in every instance, the UFO apparently was trying by some unsolved method, to establish communication with persons on earth.

"It is important to stress that there are baffling aspects of the available, credibly reported UFO cases," says Dr. McDonald.

"It is not possible to offer any pat explanations of the temporal and spatial distribution of sightings. . . .

"The present urgent need is for much more scientific examination of the available UFO evidence in order to establish—or to reject, as the case may be—the very

interesting possibility that these aerial objects may be some type of extraterrestrial probes."

Was the mysterious object that hovered above the UN building one of these extraterrestrial probes?

If so, were humanoid visitors from outer space frustrated in their efforts to establish communication with Secretary-General U Thant—and will they try again?

Only time will tell.

Chapter Five

SKIPPER JOHANSEN'S ONE-CHANCE-IN-A-MILLION HUNCH

Psychologists and other students of human behavior often try to explain a hunch as a premonition that results from self-suggestion.

Persons absorbed in psychic phenomena usually ascribe a hunch to an abnormal power of perception possessed by specially endowed individuals. They can readily enumerate instances and case histories in which even some of the most fantastic premonitions of mediums, clairvoyants, spiritualists and others endowed with psychic powers have come true.

But what about the millions of average persons who act upon a sudden impulse in the course of daily life and find, often to their amazement, that the hunch was a "lucky" one? No one yet has come up with a satisfactory explanation for this phenomenon which most of us experience at one time or another.

Witness the extraordinary case of Captain Alfred Johansen, a thirty-eight-year-old "all oceans, all tonnage" skipper of the six hundred-foot freighter, *Horn Crusader*.

On the evening of October 28, 1962, the *Horn Crusader* was voyaging cautiously some twenty miles west of Point Conception, enveloped in an increasing California coastal fog which spread well out into the Pacific.

Forward, standing watch in the bow, was a twenty-year-old apprentice seaman, Per Svahlin, from Upsala, Sweden.

By 8:30 p.m. as the *Horn Crusader* approached the Santa Barbara Channel between Santa Cruz Island and the city of Santa Barbara on the mainland the fog had so thickened that Capt. Johansen navigated his ship by radar. Shrouded in the swirling grey mist the figure of the lookout was invisible from the bridge.

At 8:55 the helmsman called out to Svahlin. It was a routine check both as to his state of wakefulness and the ship's navigation lights. He was supposed to answer with the customary phrase, "All lights are bright," but he failed to respond.

The helmsman called out again, but there was only silence. He informed Capt. Johansen who sent a seaman forward to investigate. Some minutes later the seaman returned to the bridge and reported that there was no sign of Svahlin forward.

The skipper's first reaction was anger. He thought that the lookout might have temporarily left his post to smoke a cigarette on the well deck or slipped into the galley for a cup of coffee.

Johansen ordered a search, which soon was extended throughout the entire ship but the missing lookout could not be found. A quarter of an hour later, convinced that Svahlin had fallen overboard, the skipper had the *Horn Crusader* turned around.

Standing beside the helmsman as the ship back-tracked on her course at slow speed, and with every available hand on watch, Johansen began to search for Svahlin.

The odds against finding the young apprentice seaman in the thick fog were a million to one, if not greater. They were increased by the fact that in falling from the bow Svahlin might have been drawn into the propellers of the moving ship and ground into mincemeat. If he had escaped the propellers it was questionable whether he had managed to remain afloat for so long a time. In addition, there was no certainty that he had remained in the immediate area. He might have thought that no search would be made for him and started to swim toward the mainland. Or in the opposite direction, toward Santa Cruz Island.

Johansen estimated that his ship had traveled about ten miles at reduced speed since Svahlin's disappearance

had been noticed. In retracing the course and searching the ship moved even more slowly. Thus at least two hours passed by anxiously before the *Horn Crusader* returned to the spot where the skipper decided Svahlin might have fallen overboard.

Here the ship crawled around in ever-widening, fruitless circles and everyone on board scrutinized the surface of the water for sight of a bobbing head. With visibility a scant twenty-five yards, the chance of spotting Svahlin in the fog curtain seemed remote indeed, even if he was in the area.

Johansen glanced toward the wheel. Catching his eye, the helmsman shrugged his shoulders in a gesture of discouragement. His feeling reflected that of everyone else on board. The skipper himself was all but convinced that the search was hopeless.

He was about to order that the search be abandoned when he called out on sudden impulse:

"Alter course. Seven degrees to starboard!"

The helmsman gave him a brief, surprised look and then dutifully repeated: "Aye, aye, sir. Seven degrees to starboard."

For seven minutes the *Horn Crusader* moved slowly forward on the altered course. Then the second mate, on watch in the bow with a seaman, shouted that he thought he heard a cry for help from the water.

"Where away?" Johansen asked anxiously.

"Can't tell, sir—but wait—yes, we've both heard it again."

The skipper quickly ordered the engines stopped and a boat put over the side.

As the boat was lowered the oarsmen heard the cries for help. Then they reached the ears of Johansen on the bridge.

"Svahlin!" he exclaimed. "We've found him. Alive!"

Guided by Svahlin's shouts, the boat crew spotted him in the fog. He was treading water, not more than twenty yards off to starboard. He was soon lifted into the boat, exhausted, but otherwise all right.

Svahlin later explained that he had not attempted to swim away from where he had fallen into the water because he had faith that the skipper would return to search

for him when it was discovered that he had gone overboard.

What he didn't realize was that during the more than two hours which elapsed before he was found at 10:45 p.m. he drifted some distance from the ship's course.

As for Capt. Johansen, he declared, "You have a feeling you can't explain when you're able to do something like this. You've given life to a man—a fellow human being."

He was unable to explain his sudden impulse to change course when the search appeared hopeless.

Nor, logically, has anyone else for the hunches that we experience in our daily lives.

Chapter Six

THE KING WHO HAS A CHARMED LIFE

On a July day in 1951 when Hussein Ibn Talal was sixteen years old he accompanied his grandfather, King Abdullah of Jordan, to attend prayers in the holy Mosque of Jerusalem.

They had almost reached the entrance when a wild-eyed man suddenly emerged from behind one of the tall doors and dashed past the surprised bodyguards.

"Die Abdullah!"

A black automatic pistol in the assassin's hand barked once. A .38 caliber bullet crashed into the king's turbaned head, killing him instantly.

As Abdullah's body fell to the ground, the unarmed Hussein lunged towards the assassin who had stopped two paces away.

The murderer quickly pointed the pistol at him and fired again. The second bullet smashed against Hussein's chest and staggered him.

Hussein's hands went to his chest, feeling for the wound. He stared dazedly at his hands and saw no blood. The bullet had struck a medal on his Royal Jordanian Air Force uniform and ricocheted off.

Less than a year later Hussein became King Hussein I, ruler of Jordan. Since then he has survived more attempts to take his life than any other monarch in modern history.

On July 14, 1958, one of Hussein's closest friends, his cousin, King Feisal of Iraq, was killed by conspirators in a contrived accident while driving on the highway near Baghdad. Hussein received a brief report of the tragedy while at breakfast. When he tried to phone Baghdad he found that all telephone lines had been cut and so was radio communication. Iraq was completely isolated from the rest of the world.

Later in the day he learned that Iraq assassins were planning a similar fate for him and his advisers pleaded with him to remain within the palace until the plotters could be apprehended.

"And show all of Jordan that the king is a coward?" he asked hotly.

Hussein placed two submachine guns beside him on the seat of his favorite car, a low-slung black Aston Martin, capable of one hundred and twenty mph, and continued racing along the highways as before. Several days later when the conspirators were arrested, it was learned that on the following day they had planned to wire a bomb to the ignition wires of the Aston Martin while it was parked on the grounds of the Basman Palace where he maintained a small apartment.

A few months went by and then assassins made another attempt to kill Hussein, this time while he was flying a twin-engine de Havilland Dove which had belonged to his grandfather.

On the morning of November 10, 1958, Hussein took off from Amman, Jordan, for Lausanne, Switzerland, where he planned to spend three weeks with his mother, Queen Zein, and other members of his family, including his daughter Alia.

In the co-pilot's seat beside him was Colonel Jock Dalgleish, Air Adviser to the Royal Jordanian Air Force. In the passenger compartment were two Air Force pilots, who were to fly the plane back from Switzerland; his uncle, Sherif Nasser, and a friend of his college days in England, Maurice Raynor.

The governments of the countries over which he had planned his flight route had been informed several days in advance and had promised to facilitate clearance.

Shortly after reaching Syrian territory Hussein reported to Damascus by radio that he was proceeding to Cyprus in accordance with his flight plan.

"Land at Damascus!" an unidentified voice ordered sternly. "You are not cleared to overfly."

Suspecting a trap, Hussein decided to return to Jordan at all possible speed. He immediately put the Dove into a dive. He didn't level off until it was at treetop height and he then flew at this low altitude to avoid being spotted by Syrian radar stations.

As the Dove was nearing the border two United Arab Republic Air Force MIG 17's suddenly roared by on the starboard side. They climbed steeply, circled and prepared to attack.

"I felt my time had come," Hussein recalled later. "I tore the Dove around in a circle thinking to myself that if I went at least I'd take one of the MIGs with me."

The MIGs peeled off. When they attacked, Hussein circled the Dove and the would-be killers overshot their mark.

The MIGs attacked again and again. Each time Hussein's timing was perfect. He succeeded in thwarting them because he could maneuver his plane in a tighter circle at slower speed.

Between attacks he headed doggedly for the Jordanian border. He was crossing it when he saw a hill loom directly ahead. He pulled back quickly on the controls. The Dove jolted under the terrific strain and seemed about to come to pieces. Somehow, though, it held together.

"As the nose went up we cleared the top of the hill by inches," said Hussein. "It was the worst single moment of the flight. No doubt a crash would have elated those who had been sent after us."

Minutes later the MIGs flew off in frustration and the Dove landed safely in Jordan.

On another occasion some of Hussein's enemies planned to ambush him when he returned to the palace at about sundown in his Buick convertible. As it happened, his uncle, Sherif Nasser, also owned a blue Buick con-

vertible and was driving to the palace on this particular evening.

Speeding along the highway Hussein braked to a quick stop when he saw Sherif Nasser's abandoned car in a ditch beside the road. One of the back tires and the trunk compartment were riddled with bullet holes.

A mile further on Hussein saw his uncle limping along the road.

"What happened?" he asked anxiously. "Are you injured?"

Sherif Nasser shook his head. "They mistook my car for yours. I jumped and rolled into the ditch before the machine gunning began."

One of Hussein's narrowest escapes and the one he recalls with the greatest anger occurred on August 29, 1960. He calls it "the worst outrage in the history of Jordan."

On that morning his Prime Minister, Hazza Majali, was conferring in his office with a number of Jordanians when there was a fearful explosion which blasted the Prime Minister and twelve others to pieces. A time bomb, planted in his desk had gone off.

Hussein, who had spent the preceding night in his farmhouse at Hummar, was informed of the tragedy within minutes. Grabbing a submachine gun, he jumped in his car and raced for Amman, usually a ride of from thirty to thirty-five minutes.

As he neared the city he saw a car blocking the highway. In it was General Habis Majali, the commander of the army.

"You must not proceed to Amman, Your Majesty," said the general. "My cousin, the Prime Minister, has been slain by conspirators and there are a number of other victims."

Hussein said that he would not be deterred. Not only was it his duty, but the Prime Minister had been a devoted friend.

While the general was trying to persuade Hussein to change his mind, another car stopped behind theirs and the Minister of Defense jumped out. He, too, tried to convince the king not to go on to the city.

They discussed the matter for approximately ten minutes before Hussein glanced at his watch.

"I respect your intentions but this is but a waste of time," he said firmly and with that he returned to his car and continued toward Amman.

Five minutes before he reached the Prime Minister's office there was a second explosion that wrecked the entire building. The plotters had shrewdly foreseen that Hussein would hurry to the city as soon as he received the tragic news. What they could not foretell was that he would be briefly delayed on the highway by the general and the Minister of Defense.

The second bomb had been meant for Hussein. It missed blowing him to bits because of the delay of a few minutes.

Grieving and angry, Hussein returned to his apartment in the Basman Palace. Afflicted with sinus trouble since youth, he went to his medicine cabinet in the bathroom and took out a small bottle of nose drops.

For some reason he cannot explain, he did something he had never done before. He poured a few drops of the medicine into his wash basin before using it.

To his horror the chromium on the basin fittings peeled off and the porcelain was eaten away. During his absence someone had replaced the medicine in the bottle with a corrosive deadly acid.

When gathering material for this chapter I asked King Hussein about his greatest personal reaction to the numerous attempts which have been made against his life. Fear? Bitterness? The king is not bitter and time after time he has demonstrated that he is fearless.

"The plots to assassinate me have been so constant and varied that sometimes I feel like the central figure in a detective novel," he answered me. "They have tried everything from bombs to poison."

Like the substitution of corrosive acid for nose drops one of the "detective novel" attempts to kill him involved poison. It might well be called "The Case of the Sixteen Dead Cats."

One morning, while walking around the Palace grounds, Hussein found the bodies of three dead cats under flowering bushes and made inquiries. He is fond of cats. Also he is curious.

His chief security officer seemed embarrassed at the question.

"Three more, Your Majesty? Yesterday we found seven. The day before that there were six."

"And how did they all die?"

"All of them were poisoned, Your Majesty."

Then Hussein learned the story. Syrian conspirators together with Jordanian guerrillas who objected to what they regarded as the king's too democratic views planned to kill him. The assassin was to be a man named Ahmed Na'naa, an assistant cook in the Palace kitchen.

Na'naa had been given a supply of poison and instructed to put some of it in the food served to Hussein. He did not know how much to use so he experimented on cats.

All of them had died, but not quickly enough. They had wandered around the grounds in agony before succumbing.

Palace security officers had identified the poisoner as Na'naa but instead of arresting him immediately they were keeping him under close observation, and beyond reach of the food served on the royal table, in the hope of apprehending the other plotters.

"Na'naa admitted that he had not attempted to take my life because he could not judge the dose," the king explained.

This ignorance on the part of Ahmed Na'naa explains why Hussein did not die of poisoning. A medal on his chest deflected a bullet from his heart. A delay of minutes on the highway saved him from annihilation. The list of his narrow escapes is long and spectacular . . .

"Why is it that some prominent persons like the late President Kennedy and his brother, the late Senator Robert Kennedy, are so vulnerable to assassination while others like Your Majesty, who is an outstanding example, succeed in thwarting death time after time?" I asked the king.

Hussein had no explanation to offer. I asked an officer in his security force.

"Perhaps it is kismet . . . fate," answered Ismael Haddad thoughtfully.

"But many of us believe that now and again a person, His Majesty among them, is born with a charmed life."

And perhaps he is right.

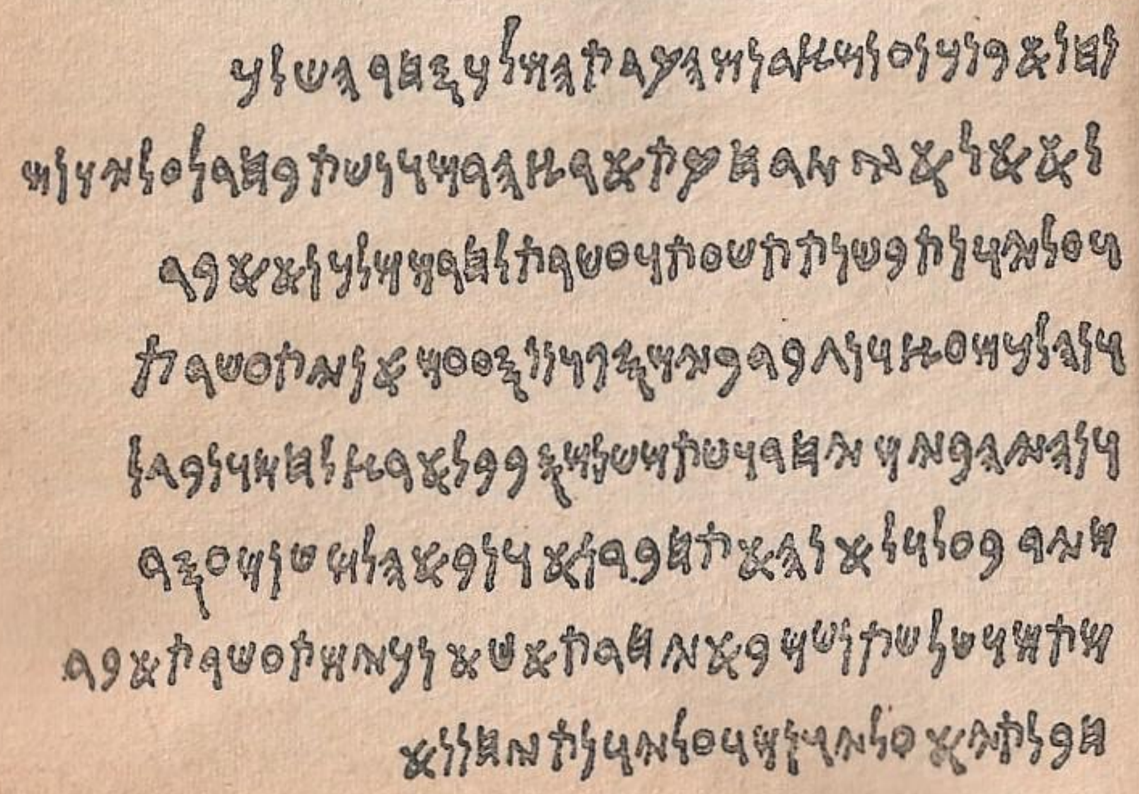
Chapter Seven

RIDDLE OF THE PHOENICIAN TABLET

For almost a century some of the world's most eminent archeologists have puzzled over the strange inscription on a squarish stone unearthed in 1872 by a Brazilian slave, Joaquin Alves de Costa, on his owner's plantation in Parahyba, in the state of Paraiba.

Joaquin was planting vegetable seed when his spade struck a stone tablet on which was chiseled a long inscription in a baffling language. His son, a self-taught draftsman, made an accurate copy of the inscription. Local authorities, unable to decipher the copy, sent it to the Brazilian Emperor's Council of State in Rio de Janeiro.

For months no one gave it any attention until one day Ladislau Netto, director of the national museum, chanced to pick it up.



"Phoenician!" he exclaimed in surprise and wondered how an uneducated slave in a remote rain forest had made such a fantastic find.

The circumstances were such that Netto was convinced the inscription was not a hoax. He made a careful translation. It read thus:

> We are Sons of Canaan from Sidon, the city of the king. Commerce has cast us on this distant shore, a land of mountains. We set [sacrificed] a youth for the exalted gods and goddesses in the nineteenth year of Hiram, our mighty king. We embarked from Ezion-Geber into the Red Sea and voyaged with ten ships. We were at sea together for two years around the land belonging to Ham [Africa] but were separated by a storm and we were no longer with our companions. So we have come here, twelve men and three women, on a new shore which I, the Admiral, control. But auspiciously may the exalted gods and goddesses favor it!

The translation caused both excitement and controversy in archeological circles. If the stone tablet was genuine it meant that a band of ancient Phoenicians had sailed to the Western Hemisphere some two thousand years before Columbus landed in the New World.

It was the only indication that in the seventh century B.C. ten Phoenician trading vessels possibly embarked from the ancient port of Ezion-Geber, near what is now the Israeli town of Elath on the Gulf of Aqaba, sailed southward through the Indian Ocean along the east coast of Africa, rounded the Cape of Good Hope and voyaged northward along the west coast of Africa.

In the midst of a severe Atlantic storm the vessels had been separated and the one bearing the unnamed "Admiral," probably the commander of the trading fleet, had been driven into the South Equatorial Current. His vessel then had been swept across the Atlantic Ocean, finally reaching land on the great protruding bulge of South America, a short distance below what is now the port of Natal.

Here the "Admiral" and his fourteen anonymous co-voyagers had gone ashore. Whatever happened to them after chiseling a brief account of their two year odyssey on the stone tablet can only be conjectured. They might have been slain by the warlike Guayaki Indians of the region—or perhaps they intermarried with them and their descendants are there to this day.

While some archeologists declared that the stone tablet was a hoax even the most skeptical among them acknowledged that it was well nigh impossible for an ignorant slave like de Costa to have perpetrated it and for what possible motive?

Among interested American archeologists and scholars was Wilberforce Eames who became head of the New York Public Library later in the century.

At the request of Eames, Dr. Netto sent him a tracing of the original inscription together with a copy of his translation. Eames placed both in a scrapbook for safe-keeping.

In the course of the years the finding of the Phoenician inscription was all but forgotten. The stone tablet was lost or mislaid.

One day in 1966 Dr. Jules Piccus, professor of romance languages at the University of Massachusetts, chanced to be in Providence, R.I., with time on his hands. He spent it browsing at a rummage sale given for the benefit of a women's college.

On one of the counters he found the scrapbook which had belonged to Wilberforce Eames. In the scrapbook, still intact, were the tracing and the translation of the Phoenician inscription.

Dr. Piccus' excitement heightened. Where was the stone tablet? No one knew.

Ultimately he took the tracing to one of the foremost authorities on Semitic languages, his friend, Prof. Cyrus H. Gordon of Brandeis University. Dr. Gordon studied it long and carefully.

He made his own translation and when he compared the inscription on the tablet with the latest discoveries about ancient Phoenician writing he found that the original inscription contained a use of words and quirks of

phraseology which could not possibly have been known to the most erudite nineteenth century forger.

In May, 1968, Dr. Gordon declared, "The alternatives are either that the inscription is genuine or that the inscriber was a great prophet."

There have been many claims and counter-claims as to the first people to have landed in the New World.

Although Christopher Columbus is popularly honored for the discovery some archeologists contend that a Viking settlement existed briefly at about A.D. 1000 at L'Anse au Meadow in Newfoundland, that it was founded by Lief Erikson after the Greenland settlements were established and that the Newfoundland colony mysteriously disappeared about 1408.

Some archeologists point to the controversial Kensington Stone, found in Minnesota in 1898 as evidence that the Vikings traveled this far west—or perhaps to what is now Oklahoma—in the fourteenth century A.D.

Some Japanese scholars maintain that their countrymen landed on the coast of Ecuador about 2500 B.C. and left behind the recently discovered pottery artifacts that are almost identical to the Jomon pottery made in Japan during the same era.

There are Chinese archeologists who claim that at least five of their race, led by a Buddhist monk, voyaged to the west coast of Mexico about A.D. 459.

There are also Italian archeologists who cite a Latin inscription discovered on a rock on the coast near York, Maine, and the finding of Roman coins dated A.D. 237 as evidence that the Romans were the first to land.

Among other claimants are the Welsh who stoutly believe that their Prince Madoc ab Owain Gwynedd voyaged to what is now Mobile Bay, Alabama, in 1170 and led a party of his countrymen on an exploring expedition inland, up rivers, reaching the region north of Tennessee.

Dr. Gordon points out that the landing of Phoenicians in Brazil, as recorded on the stone tablet, probably was accidental. But, he contends, there may have been intentional landings of Mediterranian seafarers in the New World many centuries before Columbus and that they brought with them such architectural ideas as pyramid-

building and monumental stone structures "supported by a forest of columns in the Egyptian manner.

Was the mysterious Phoenician "Admiral" one of them? The world probably will never know.

Chapter Eight

SPAWNING GROUND OF INEXPLICABLE DISASTERS

On the evening of December 22, 1968, the inter-island schooner, *Federal Queen,* British registry, was making a routine voyage, ferrying seventy-nine fieldhands between Union and St. Vincent islands in the West Indies.

The night was mild and the Caribbean calm in the light of an unclouded moon. No other ship was visible as far as the horizon.

The sturdy schooner was five miles northwest of Cannouan Island when it suddenly capsized for no apparent reason. Forty-one of the passengers were drowned. Thirty-eight succeeded in swimming or floating to nearby islands.

Said Ralph Alves, a survivor who was rescued from the coastal rocks off Cannouan Island, "It all happened in an instant. The vessel turned right over. Fish as long as I am came side by side with me for about two hours. Of course I was frightened, but the only thing I could do was swim."

Reported a UPI correspondent from Port of Spain, Trinidad: "Officials said they had not been able to determine what caused the vessel to capsize. . . . The U. S. Coast Guard reported that the *Federal Queen* apparently had not collided with another ship."

So it was that the *Federal Queen* was added to the long list of unexplained disasters that have occurred on the sea and in the air space above the deadly Bermuda Triangle, the five-hundred-thousand-square-mile area of the Western Atlantic bounded roughly by the tip of the Florida peninsula to the west, Bermuda to the northeast and the Grenadine Islands of the West Indies to the south.

The Bermuda Triangle is by no means a remote or lonely region of the ocean. Scores of passenger and cargo

ships ply its sealanes. Smaller vessels constantly journey from one island to another and to the mainland. Skyliners fly above the Triangle on regular schedules along a number of air routes between the United States, the West Indies, and air terminals in Central and South America. U. S. Coast Guard, Navy, Air Force and meteorlogical aircraft all patrol the region on various missions.

Despite all this traffic, however, 61 ships and 40 planes—plus passengers and crews totaling 1,103 persons —have vanished within the Triangle without leaving a trace or a single clue to the cause. In addition to these total disappearances, there have been numerous unexplained disasters such as that which occurred to the *Federal Queen.*

While the phenomena was noted as early as the sixteenth century when Spanish galleons frequently disappeared while voyaging in the Triangle between Spain and South America, the usual explanation was that they had been captured and scuttled by pirates who frequented the Spanish Main.

In 1840, however, the mystery of the French ship, *Rosalie,* suggested the presence of other sinister forces.

The *Rosalie* was a large, seaworthy ship. She sailed from Le Havre for Havana, Cuba, with a full cargo which included perfumes, bolts of silk, wine and other valuable shipments.

Several weeks after her departure from France she was found drifting among the Leeward Islands, considerably *south* of Cuba.

When the *Rosalie* was boarded by an officer and seamen of a British frigate they discovered that she had been abandoned. Her sails were set and although no one was aboard, everything had been left neat and orderly. Her entire cargo was still stowed in her holds, untouched.

The *Rosalie* was the first victim of the Triangle actually to be recorded. From then on, year by year, more ships were added to the growing list.

One of the most noteworthy, and widely publicized, was the U. S. Navy's supply ship *Cyclops,* which voyaged into oblivion after sailing from Barbados, B.W.I., bound for Norfolk, Va., on March 4, 1918.

The *Cyclops* was a big vessel with a displacement of nineteen thousand tons. She carried a cargo of ten-thousand-eight-hundred tons of manganese, and a personnel of three hundred and nine men. No radio messages were received from her after she left Barbados. Nor was as much as a stick of wreckage ever found.

Following a lengthy investigation, the U. S. Navy reported: "The disappearance of this ship has been one of the most baffling mysteries in the annals of the Navy, all attempts to locate her having proved unsuccessful. Many theories have been advanced, but none that satisfactorily accounts for her disappearance."

Among the many other surface vessels adding to the mystery in the years that followed were the freighter *S.S. Cotopaxi,* which vanished between Charleston, S.C., and Havana in 1926 with twenty-nine men; the Greek schooner *Embiricos,* which was found drifting south of Bermuda in April 1932, her sails neatly furled, her hull newly painted and no one aboard; and the yacht, *Gloria Colite,* which was found abandoned on a calm sea after departing from St. Vincent, B.W.I., in February, 1940.

It was in 1963 that among a number of disappearances of ships in the Triangle there were two as spectacular as the *Cyclops.*

On February 2 of that year the two hundred and fifty-four-foot tanker *Marine Sulphur Queen* left Beaumont, Texas, with a cargo of sulphur and a crew of thirty-nine. Like the *Cyclops* her destination was Norfolk, Va.

On the following night she made a routine radio report that she was off Dry Tortugas, about to round the Florida peninsula. That was the last ever heard from her.

Three days later when the *Marine Sulphur Queen* was overdue in port, the U. S. Coast Guard started an intensive search for her in the western sector of the Triangle. On February 20 a life jacket and a few pieces of wreckage were found floating fourteen miles southeast of Key West. They might—or might not—have been from the *Marine Sulphur Queen.* If they were, they were the only relics ever recovered.

A few months later, on July 1, 1963, the U. S.-registered trawler *Sno' Boy,* sixty-three feet in length, left Kingston, Jamaica, with a crew of forty bound for the

fishing grounds off Northeast Cay. It was a comparatively short run on a calm sea. The *Sno' Boy* was equipped with a good radio transmitter. No message of distress was received from her before she vanished.

When aircraft took to the skies above the Bermuda Triangle they, too, began to disappear unaccountably, intensifying the mystery.

Among the forty which thus far have vanished, five TBM Avenger torpedo planes on December 5, 1945, provided a bizarre curtain-raiser.

At 2:10 p.m. the five Avengers took off from their base at the Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Naval Air Station on a routine patrol. They were to fly one hundred and sixty miles due east over the Atlantic, turn north for forty miles and then head back to base.

The sky was clear on takeoff. Engines, radios, navigation and other equipment had been carefully checked-out and were in excellent condition. Each Avenger was supposed to carry a crew of three. One was short a crewman who had failed to report on time.

The Avengers took off in perfect formation, flying at a speed of two hundred and fifteen mph. The flight was led by a pilot with six years of experience, Lt. Charles C. Taylor.

At 3:06 p.m., almost an hour later, the radio operator at the base picked up a confusing, garbled message from the Avenger flight and he requested that the message be repeated.

While waiting for an answer he intercepted a plane-to-plane conversation between Lt. Taylor and a pilot in one of the other Avengers: "Can't see land . . . can't be sure where we are . . . we aren't sure of our position."

Immediately thereafter the base operator lost contact with the flight. A few minutes later, however, the radio operator at Opa-Locka Air Station, south of Fort Lauderdale, intercepted further plane-to-plane conversation.

"Where are we? It looks like the world rolled over . . . It's all white around me."

The voice apparently was that of Lt. Taylor, for the speaker went on to say that he was turning the flight command over to another pilot.

At 4:27 p.m. the base radio operator briefly reestab-

lished contact with the substituting—but unidentified—flight leader who reported: "Not certain where we are . . . Everything is wrong . . . strange. We can't be sure of any direction. Even the ocean doesn't look as it should be . . ."

There was a pause of a few seconds and then: "We think we must be about two hundred and twenty-five miles northeast of the base. It looks like we are——"

The voice suddenly cut out. Now, thoroughly alarmed, the Fort Lauderdale base contacted Banana River Naval Air Station, one hundred and fifty miles north and requested that help be sent to the "lost" flight.

Within minutes a twin-engined Martin Mariner took to the air with a crew of thirteen and rescue and survival gear. The communications officer aboard the Mariner, Lt. H. G. Cone, USNR, made several routine radio reports. The last to be received was at 6:03 p.m. when he reported that the Mariner had started to search in the area where the flight had presumably disappeared. Cone added that there was a slight west wind near the surface of the sea and stronger at six thousand feet.

The toll of aircraft taken by unknown forces in the Bermuda Triangle since then has been too large to discuss each disappearance in detail. The victims have ranged from small private planes to big, multi-engined airliners. Among them:

On January 29, 1948, the *Star Tiger*, a four-engine Tudor IV airliner owned and operated by British South American Airways, notified Kindley Field, Bermuda, that it was making an approach. It carried a crew of six and twenty-one passengers, including Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham, commander of the RAF's Second Tactical Air Force. Kindley Field picked up the *Star Tiger* on the radar screen. Then it abruptly vanished. There was no explanation, nor was any trace of the aircraft ever found.

During that same year, on December 28, a twin-engine DC-3 piloted by Capt. Robert Linquist left San Juan, Puerto Rico, with thirty-two Miami-bound passengers. The ETA—estimated time of arrival—was 4:03 a.m.

At 4:13 a.m., nearing the western end of the Bermuda Triangle, Capt. Linquist radioed the Miami control tower:

"Approaching from south. Distance fifty miles. Will stand by for landing instructions."

Flying conditions were ideal and there was absolutely no indication that anything was wrong. But that was the last of the DC-3.

On January 17, 1949, a sister airliner to the *Star Tiger* piloted by Capt. J. C. McPhee, vanished with her crew of four and twenty passengers while on a flight from Bermuda to Kingston, Jamaica. McPhee's routine radio report was received at both airfields when the Tudor IV was one hundred and eighty miles south of Bermuda. And that was it.

On February 2, 1953, a British York transport disappeared in the same area with a crew of six and thirty-three passengers. A four-engine U. S. Navy Constellation carrying forty-two vanished while in the area on October 30, 1954.

Another Navy aircraft, a Martin P5M patrol bomber with a crew of ten flew into oblivion after taking off from Bermuda on November 9, 1956; a USAF KB50 tanker, piloted by Major Robert Tawney, on January 8, 1962.

On June 5, 1965, it was a C-119 flying boxcar that vanished on a flight between Homestead AFB in Florida and Grand Turk Island in the Bahamas. On April 5, 1966, a converted B-25 cargo plane between Miami and Aruba; in January 1967 both a Chase YC-122 bound for Bimini from Fort Lauderdale and a Piper Comanche en route for St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands.

The disappearance of the Comanche, owned and piloted by John W. Watson of Airplane Charters, Inc., of Puerto Rico, received considerable publicity because its passengers were the socialite Stephen Curriers. Mrs. Currier, granddaughter of Andrew W. Mellon, Pittsburgh financier, had a personal fortune estimated at over seven hundred million dollars and her husband was also a millionaire in his own right.

So the unexplainable disasters to ships and planes, the inexplicable disappearances, have continued.

Instead of approaching a solution, the mystery shrouding the sinister forces within the Bermuda Triangle has continued to deepen.

Chapter Nine

MANHATTAN'S MOST BIZARRE HERMITS

To live the life of a hermit it is not necessary to find a cave in some remote wilderness, nor seek sea-guarded solitude on an uncharted isle.

Many present-day hermits live in large cities, secluded from the teeming life around them in the recesses of old brownstones, apartment houses, even in hotel rooms. Some are able to remain aloof from the world until they die; or until perhaps dislodged by a fire, the demolition of the building, or other unforeseen happenstance.

Of all such metropolitan hermits, none was more bizarre than the Cainas family, longtime tenants of a suite on an upper floor in the Hotel America, on West 47th street in New York City, a grimy graystone structure only a few steps from Broadway.

There were two living members of the family, Mrs. Michaela Cainas and her beautiful dark-eyed daughter, Elena. They shared the suite with an unmaterialized ghost, Mrs. Cainas' departed husband, José.

No record exists as to when all three members of the family—José was still living—took up residence in the suite. According to Fred Barlow, a former owner of the hotel:

"I took over the Hotel America back in 1923 and found that the Cainas were among the guests on the seventh floor. They were quiet people who kept to themselves, seldom leaving their rooms. When they rarely spoke to any of the employees it was in Spanish.

"They seemed to be well off. I believe Mr. Cainas was in the sugar business. Their check for the rent came regularly from a Cuban bank.

"The hotel clerk told me they were spiritualists. He was never permitted to enter the suite. I myself was denied entrance on one occasion when I wanted to find out if any repairs were needed.

" 'Vaya por favor—please go,' Mrs. Cainas called out, after I rang several times.

"Standing there in the hall I heard strange knocking sounds on the floor and walls.

"A few days later a strong odor—I identified it as the smell of death—came from the suite, permeating the hall. I insisted then on entering and when I did I found Mr. Cainas lying on the bed, fully dressed and dead. The coroner said he had been dead for several days."

After the father was buried, the mother and daughter kept on living in the suite and refusing to permit anyone to enter.

For fifteen years thereafter the widow never left her rooms. Every afternoon a bellhop knocked at her door and she pushed two one-dollar bills out into the hall through a crack under the door.

The bellhop followed a routine which never deviated. In a nearby restaurant he purchased spinach, baked beans, four raw eggs, baked potatoes and two Hoyo de Monterey cigars, all of which he left on a tray outside of the Cainas suite.

When he returned an hour later he did not knock. Outside of the door, beside the tray neatly stacked with empty dishes, were a man's suit to be pressed, a pair of men's shoes to be shined, and a man's shirt to be laundered.

Once a week Mrs. Cainas permitted Maria Vedado, a Spanish-speaking hotel employee, to vacuum and clean the two rooms and bath of the suite while she maintained a silent watch. Usually the daughter remained in the room that was not being cleaned, but on one occasion Maria happened to overhear a conversation between Mrs. Cainas and Elena that frightened her.

"Por Dios!" she exclaimed to Joe Engels, the desk clerk, and crossed herself. "Do you know what goes on behind their locked door?"

"The dead one, the Señor Cainas, returns from the grave every day to visit them. He changes his clothes and then smokes two cigars while they eat the food brought to them by the bellhop."

"Did you ever see this ghost?" Engels asked matter-of-factly.

"No," answered Maria and crossed herself again.

"Neither did anyone else. There's no such thing as a ghost."

"Why, then does the Señora Cainas buy two cigars

each day? Why does she also put out a man's clothing and shoes to be cleaned?"

Engels shrugged. "Maybe she smokes the cigars herself," he suggested.

Engels was not a curious man. In more than a decade of hotel-clerking he had become well aware that some guests had idiosyncrasies. As long as they weren't noisy, offensive or invited the attention of the police, he was inclined to tolerate them. He did, however mention the matter to Peter, the bellhop.

"Anything unusual about those man's clothes you take out every day to be cleaned?"

"Come to think about it the suit always has a musty smell—sort of like earth," Peter answered. "Sometimes I've wondered about the man's shoes I have shined. They're always muddy. They're too big for Mrs. Cainas or the girl to wear, and besides, they never leave the hotel."

"But you've never heard a man's voice in their suite?"

"Not since old Cainas died."

Engels was skeptical, although he acknowledged to himself that while it was entirely possible for a man to go to one of the upper floors without being observed, neither Mrs. Cainas nor her daughter was likely to receive a surreptitious male visitor daily. Furthermore if they did, they would not call attention to it by putting a man's clothes outside of their door to be cleaned.

Nevertheless the hotel clerk did make a somewhat superficial investigation, questioning some of the other guests on the seventh floor. None of them had ever seen a man enter or leave the Cainas suite nor heard a male voice within.

Once in a while, late at night, tenants of nearby rooms reported, they heard the daughter sing an aria from an opera in a beautiful soprano voice. On even less frequent occasions, on returning to their rooms, also late at night, they caught a glimpse of Elena slowly walking in the dingy corridor. She was invariably dressed in black and wore a black cross on a gold chain around her neck. As soon as she realized she was seen she'd bolt, panic-stricken to the suite and quickly close the door behind her.

How long Mrs. Cainas and her daughter might have continued their bizarre, secluded existence in their suite there is no telling. One day, however, the Hotel America was purchased by the Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank and all tenants received notice that the old building was to be demolished.

During the weeks that followed every guest packed up and departed—with the exception of the widow and her daughter. As the day approached when the demolition was to start, a representative of the new owner knocked on the door to inform them that time was getting short.

"Vaya, por favor," Mrs. Cainas called out and refused to open the door.

On the morning before the wreckers were scheduled to arrive a well-dressed Latin-looking man walked into the stripped lobby and informed Engels, who was still on duty, that his name was Eduardo Portales and he had come for Mrs. Cainas and her daughter.

"He wasn't upstairs very long, considering," said Engels later. "They must have admitted him right away and evidently their bags were already packed. He was carrying the heavier bags when they came down. They followed him out of the lobby without looking either left or right. Not as much as a goodbye wave to me. I watched the three of them get into a taxi and drive away."

That was the last anyone ever saw of Mrs. Cainas and her beautiful daughter Elena.

Later in the afternoon Engels and two porters entered the suite to remove the furniture. They found everything neat and clean—except for a small pile of fresh earth on the bedroom floor.

Chapter Ten

COBRA GOD OF MOLAR BUND

Twelve miles from the city of New Delhi, ignored by the Indian Government, is the little village of Molar Bund, a scattering of straw and mud huts hiding behind high thorn-bush walls. It has neither sanitation nor laws. It is not even taxed, for it has nothing worth taxing.

Yet, in an odd way, Molar Bund is famous. It is the snake charmer capital of the world, legendary home of Gorak Nath, patron saint of snake charmers, who possesses the power to make the bite of the most poisonous reptile harmless.

Most snake charmers are orthodox Hindus who will not kill a snake no matter how deadly it may be. For hundreds of years they have been returning to Molar Bund in the month of June to liberate all the reptiles they use to entertain spectators in the public squares and market places of Asia, Africa and the subcontinent of India.

Reptiles, especially cobras, used in "charming" become weak and die after close confinement. So they are released in Molar Bund in the early summer to breed and the charmers remain in the village to catch a new supply. This continues until the festival of Nag Panchami, or Cobra Fifth Day, which occurs early in September, the fifth day after the new moon.

On this day they pay homage to Gorak Nath. After invoking his protection from a fatal snake bite they return to the road for months with their baskets of reptiles and their *beens,* the reed instruments with gourd attachments which produce the shrill, monotonous "music" that supposedly charms snakes.

One June day in 1966 Edward Burland, a Los Angeles cameraman arrived in Molar Bund. He sought out the village headman or *lumbardar,* an ageless ancient named Chundra Nath, and requested permission to make a documentary-type movie of the village and the activities of the snake charmers.

"Photograph what you will," Chundra Nath told him courteously. "But remember, Sahib, that many of the snakes are poisonous. One should be careful not to be bitten, especially if one is a non-believer."

"In what?" Burland asked.

"In the protection of Gorak Nath, part of whose name was bestowed upon me when I became lumbardar."

Burland promised to be careful. But wasn't it true, he asked, that poisonous snakes had their fangs drawn as soon as they were caught?

Chundra Nath extended one of his gnarled and wrinkled hands in which he held a string of orange-colored good-

luck beads. The hand was deeply ripped and scarred with fang marks. There is no mistaking the scar of a cobra bite. Like its small, but equally deadly American relative, the coral snake, a cobra hangs on to its victim until shaken loose.

"There are none among us over twelve, the age when one becomes a disciple, who has not been bitten by a cobra, and in some instances many times," said Chundra Nath. "Yet none in the village has ever died, for we believe in the power of Gorak Nath, who caught and conquered Naga Naga, the Evil King of Serpents when the earth was young."

Burland promised to be careful. He diplomatically refrained from mentioning that if by chance he was bitten he'd place his faith in medical science and the cobra anti-venom kit in his luggage.

Burland worked several days filming sequences for his movie and Chundra Nath was very cooperative. Reptile subjects were plentiful. The headman captured deadly black-necked cobras from nearby rockpiles and thorn bush and "charmed" them for the movie.

Among the actors was a yellow-headed cobra about six feet in length.

"This is a fine male child, Sahib," the headman said. "It will make an excellent dancer. Its hood measures almost six inches."

Female cobras, he went on to explain, are hoodless and do not dance. They are captured and taken on the road only to provide companionship for the males.

Chundra Nath had the big yellow head perform for the camera. Hunkering on his lean haunches, the headman began to play on his *been,* swaying head and arms slowly from side to side. The cobra reared and began weaving too. It moved with sinister grace in tempo with Chundra Nath.

"I will show you something, Sahib." The headman had stopped playing and was slowly putting the *been* on the ground with his left hand. At the same time he extended his right, dangling a string of beads, and swung them gently to and fro.

The cobra continued to sway, now to the rhythm of the beads, its evil, unblinking eyes seemingly hypnotized by

them. Gradually the beads stopped moving. Leisurely the cobra sank back on the ground, coiling as if asleep.

"Hypnotized?" Burland asked.

"No, Sahib. I wished to demonstrate to you how little a non-believer knows about snakes. This male child did not "dance" to the sound of the *been.* He responded to the motion of the pipe. A serpent will follow any slow movement which does not startle him. This is the first lesson a disciple learns."

During the next few days Burland shot more footage. And then, one afternoon, when he was alone, several hundred yards from the village, he was bitten in the ankle by a lurking black-necked cobra about seven feet in length. As he later recalled:

"I failed to see the big snake because I was sighting through my camera, taking a long shot of the village. I took a few steps backward towards a rockpile and I don't know whether the cobra was coiled on one of the rocks or came out from a crevice and deliberately attacked me.

"Which ever way it was I felt a searing pain as its fangs stabbed into my left ankle through the thin wool sock. I kicked out with the foot and the writhing snake went with it. Its body flailed and whipped heavily about and I frantically tried to rid myself of that fearsome cobra with its sharp, re-curved teeth. I could feel it chewing into the flesh above the ankle bone. Jerking free, I dropped my camera and made a dash for my quarters.

"I had heard that it is wrong to run when bitten by a poisonous snake. That this hastens the circulation of the poison through the body. I was terrified, though. I had only one thing in mind. To get to my luggage as quickly as possible, obtain the anti-venom and inject myself.

"I searched for the anti-venom kit in a frenzy. I was terrified when I could not find it. I had forgotten to pack it when I left the hotel in New Delhi.

"My lower leg had begun to swell almost immediately. It was extremely painful, but fighting that overwhelming surge of panic on realizing the anti-venom was missing was even worse.

"I wanted to bolt for my rented car and drive like a fiend to the hospital in New Delhi. How much time did

I have before the lethal cobra venom took effect? Ten minutes, perhaps fifteen? I'd be dead by the time I reached the hospital.

"Pain and a black mist were pressing in on me from all sides, snatching away time. All I thought of then was time. I needed it desperately.

"I don't know whether I started running towards the car. I dimly remember coming out of my panic with Chundra Nath's hand on my arm, restraining me. And I heard his voice: 'Have faith in Gorak Nath and all will be well, Sahib. This has happened to many of us.'

"I tried to wrench myself free. I screamed that I didn't want magic but anti-venom. That it was the only thing which could save me."

"Have faith in Gorak Nath, Sahib," the headman repeated gently. "Already my granddaughter, Dacci, approaches with a brew of *kali pahad."*

Burland was dimly aware of the woman who arrived. She was young and she was wearing a ring ornament in her left nostril. In her hand she held a gourd containing a dark, viscid fluid. Chundra Nath took it from her and held it insistently to Burland's lips.

"Drink of the *kali pahad,* Sahib. Drink deeply of the brew of Gorak Nath."

Burland stared at the gourd in desperation. His left leg up to his hip was an agony of white hot fire. Time was running out. He no longer had an alternative.

He drank the contents of the gourd, gagging and forcing himself to swallow. It tasted musty and bitter, with an opium-like smell. . . .

After that was a continuous nightmare. He remembered only that the headman and his granddaughter, Dacci, wearing a nostril ring of a writhing cobra, and miles of reptilian film kept pouring out of his camera and crawling all over him. . . .

He opened his eyes and saw something waving slowly above his face. Gradually his eyes came in focus and he realized it was a fan and Dacci was fanning him.

His head throbbed, his left leg felt numb. He discovered then that he was lying on a pallet in the mud and straw hut that was his quarters. There was a small tray with a

gourd of watery milk and *chapattis,* the unleavened bread of North India on the bare ground beside him.

"How long have I been here?" he asked in a weak voice.

"Four days. Soon Gorak Nath will make your leg well again."

That first awakening, according to Burland, was trance-like. He fell asleep again and this time his sleep was deep and dreamless.

When he awoke again, Chundra Nath was by his side. His headache had left him.

"It goes well, Sahib," said the headman. "The leg heals."

Burland raised himself on his elbow. He felt very weak and there was still some numbness in his leg. There were jagged scars around the ankle where the cobra had chewed and two tiny fang marks were still visible.

"Two days have passed since your first awakening." Chundra Nath answered his unspoken question. "Soon you will be able to get up."

"You saved my life . . ."

"No, Sahib. It was the mercy of Gorak Nath. Perhaps when you again visit India you will come to the Temple of Gorak Nath at Agra during the festival of Nag Panchami."

Another five days went by before the headman decided that Burland was well enough to leave the village. On his return to New Delhi he went directly to the hospital and had his leg examined. He was told that he was well on the road to recovery and that there would be no after-effects. The ankle scars, however, evidence of his narrow escape from death, would probably remain as a permanent reminder.

Discussing the case, the noted New Delhi professor of herpetology, Dr. A. J. B. Fallon, explained that the *kali pahad* Burland had taken after being bitten, was an ancient native concoction consisting of gurni wood in a solution of *ghee,* or melted butter, with opium added.

"Its effect is to numb pain and induce prolonged sleep," he said, "as an ingested anti-venom it has no curative value."

Was it then the mercy of Gorak Nath, patron saint of snake charmers, that saved the life of Burland?

Neither Dr. Fallon nor any other herpetologist familiar with the deadliness of the venom injected by a hooded cobra, *Hemachatus haemachatus,* can think of any other explanation.

Chapter Eleven

JINX OF THE F-111

Taking off from Takhli Air Base and winging faster than the speed of sound across Thailand at treetop level, a camouflage-mottled F-111 headed towards North Viet Nam's panhandle on a bombing mission.

On that April day in 1968 something suddenly went wrong. The F-111, most advanced of American warplanes, crashed in the dense jungle of western Laos.

It was the third crash of one of the six-million-dollar planes since a squadron of six arrived in Thailand less than a month before.

U. S. military investigators succeeded in recovering the wreckage of the second plane. They examined it thoroughly and reported that the apparent cause of the crash was a one-dollar tube of sealant forgotten by a careless mechanic. Somehow, they concluded, the tube had worked its way into the automatic flight mechanism and jammed the controls.

The other two F-111s were lost under most mysterious circumstances. They took off from Takhli Air Base at night for missions over North Viet Nam. In both instances the crews radioed the base at predesignated check-points that everything was all right. They neither made further reports nor sent out a distress call. They were believed to have crashed in dense jungle either in eastern Thailand or western Laos.

U. S. military investigators advanced four possible theories for both of the crashes; enemy antiaircraft fire, sabotage, mechanical failure or human error.

Sabotage was viewed as the least likely cause. The F-111s had been under constant guard since the arrival of the squadron in Thailand.

Enemy antiaircraft fire, although always a possibility, was discounted. The F-111s were difficult targets to hit, especially when flying low and at high speed over thick jungle.

Mechanical failure was considered a more likely possibility despite frequent inspections and checks. So was human error, although pilots were chosen from among the best and underwent six months of training on F-111s at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada.

"We simply do not have a clue to the cause of the crashes of the first and third F-111s," a USAF spokesman acknowledged.

There was a fifth possible cause of the crashes which was not mentioned, although pilots and ground crews both in the USAF and the Navy had been whispering it for many months—The Jinx.

Call it superstition or whatever else you will, there are several reasons why a specific plane or a type of aircraft may be labeled ominously as "jinxed." Unconventional design, the crash of a test pilot, difficult maneuverability, a high degree of engine failure or, more vaguely, an unexplained "bug," all have resulted in The Jinx.

One of the earliest, most jinx-haunted aircraft in the history of aviation was the British D.H.2 of World War I. These DeHavillands were not aerodynamically stable because the engine, a 100-hp Gnome rotary, was located at fuselage center instead of the nose and the engine itself was built in large part from secondhand French surplus. There were so many crashes that the D.H.2 was called "The Spinning Incinerator."

In time some of the hazards were eliminated. The D.H.4s of the latter days of World War I and our early air mail era were better-designed and better-engined. Nevertheless The Jinx still haunted them. They were called "Flying Coffins" and most pilots hated flying them.

In the case of the F-111s The Jinx did not wait until the planes took to the air. It moved right in at the start, even before the drawing board stage in 1962 when the then Defense Secretary Robert McNamara over-ruled

top U. S. military leaders and gave the contract for the 1,650-mph fighter bomber to General Dynamics.

The F-111 was planned as the world's first and most versatile combat plane with "variable geometry" wings which extend for greater lift during takeoff and landing, folding back for less drag at supersonic speeds.

It was to be equipped with "terrain radar," automatically adjusting the plane's altitude to ground topography so that the plane could fly low, under an enemy radar network.

Congressional controversy soon developed over the six-million-dollar aircraft. So did military objection. The U. S. Navy fought it adamantly, insisting that the naval version was hopelessly overweight for carriers. Many navy pilots shared the opinion that it was "jinxed."

When the first six F-111s arrived in Thailand in the early spring of 1968, The Jinx came with them and it wasn't long before three of them crashed.

Then, not long afterward, and several thousand miles away, an F-111 came in for a landing at Nellis Air Force Base.

"For no discernible reason the pilot was unable to maintain aircraft control," said an Air Force spokesman, "both he and the co-pilot ejected."

The plane crashed two hundred and fifty feet short of a runway.

More crashes followed. The 11th since the F-111s commenced flying occurred on September 23, 1968. It was then the Air Force ordered the temporary grounding of all F-111s. Three weeks later, when the ban was lifted under restricted conditions it was announced that there would be some structural modifications made.

But what about The Jinx which has plagued the highly controversial plane since the beginning—or so many pilots maintain?

Despite their great progress in aeronautics, aviation engineers have yet to discover either an equation or formula for getting rid of The Jinx.

Chapter Twelve

THE CLERGYMAN WHO DE-HAUNTS HOUSES

No one believes more firmly in ghosts than the Rev. John D. Pearce-Higgins, canon of Southwark Cathedral in London, and vice-chairman of the Church of England's Fellowship for Psychic and Spiritual Studies.

The canon, a lean, pleasant-faced, middle-aged man with receding hair and horn-rimmed glasses, is one of the increasing number of clergymen of various faiths who have shown interest in communicating with spirits in recent years.

Another, and perhaps the most notable, is Bishop James A. Pike, resigned bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California at San Francisco.

On September 3, 1967, Bishop Pike took part in a seance in Toronto, Canada. Two weeks later, on September 17, the seance was televised. It was then revealed that through one of the world's best-known mediums, Arthur Ford, the bishop had been in communication with the older of his two sons, Jim, 20, who had taken his own life in a New York City hotel room on February 4, 1966.

The Rev. Pearce-Higgins' interest in the beyond is much greater in scope than contacting the spirit of a person who was close to him in life. Many of the ghosts with whom he communicates are those of persons who were totally unknown to him and a number of them have been dead for several centuries.

The canon believes that a ghost may be the earth-bound spirit of an individual who died without realizing it, and who remains behind because it doesn't know what to do or where to go.

"The churches are partly to blame for this," he explains. "They do not teach a person what to expect after the spirit sheds the physical body. If they did, we would have fewer haunted houses."

When someone in England discovers—usually to his uneasiness, if not actual fright—that he is sharing the premises with a spectral tenant, it is the canon whose services are requested most often to de-haunt the house. He has been outstandingly successful.

At times he finds that a de-haunting task is complicated by the presence of more ghosts than he first suspected and that they were individuals who lived generations, even centuries apart.

In one bizarre case in Shelford, England, the canon discovered that an old house was haunted by the ghosts of two monks, an unwed mother and her tiny baby, the wife of a clergyman and a hobo.

The first structure on the site was a monastery constructed in the year 1603. It was torn down in 1807 and replaced by a new monastery. This, in turn, was demolished in 1899 and a private dwelling built to accommodate the minister of a nearby church.

The residence was occupied in 1900 by the Rev. Thomas Oglivy, and his wife, Anne, who lived in it until their deaths in 1941. For approximately twenty-four years the house then remained vacant. In 1965 it was purchased by a widow, Mrs. Shielagh Lazzarini, 40, who moved in with her three teen-age sons.

Two nights later one of the sons was reading in bed when the door opened and a woman silently entered.

"At first I thought it was my mother," he said. "But as she approached I saw that she was wearing a gown of the Victorian period. She was young and quite attractive in appearance."

As young Lazzerini watched, the ghost went to his bureau and opened the drawers, one by one. Apparently she did not find whatever it was she sought. After closing the drawers she silently left the room.

On the following morning, at breakfast, he related his eerie experience. His mother and two brothers tried to convince him that he had been dreaming and he was inclined to believe them.

That night one of his brothers had the identical experience. So did the other brother on the night afterwards.

On the fourth night, shortly after Shielagh Lazzerini went to bed, the young woman in the Victorian gown entered her room, walked to her dressing table, a solid piece of furniture with several drawers, opened them, looked inside and closed them again.

Then Mrs. Lazzerini was further startled to see the dressing table rise in the air and lower again to the floor.

The ghost of the woman did not do this, she later explained. It was as if it had been lifted by the unseen hands of someone possessing great strength.

The next day the family asked the Rev. Pearce-Higgins to solve the spectral mystery. When he arrived with a well-known medium, Donald Page, and Page's psychic assistant, Mrs. Edna Taylor, Mrs. Lazzerini explained that neither she nor her sons had been frightened by the specter. It was evident it did not intend to harm them and they did not mind sharing the house with it. But what was it seeking, and who, or what, caused the dressing table to rise several feet into the air?

The canon tried to communicate with the ghost through Page. He was not successful. But while in a trance the medium was instructed to look through an old trunk in a corner of the cobwebby attic. In it they found the faded photograph of the Rev. Oglivy's wife, Anne, taken when she was a young bride. It was the woman in the Victorian gown who had visited the Lazzerinis' bedrooms.

Although no member of the family saw the ghost of the woman again from then on there was a series of bizarre incidents. They heard noises in the night such as the opening and closing of drawers and doors, the rattling of door locks, inexplicable footsteps on the stairs and in unoccupied rooms, the creaking of an old rocking chair. On four more occasions Mrs. Lazzerini saw her dressing table lifted and lowered to the floor by unseen hands.

Rev. Pearce-Higgins and his two colleagues returned to the house several times thereafter. The first time, when Page went into a trance, the canon was startled to discover that there was another ghost occupying the house.

The medium spoke to him in a strange voice, that of a monk named Brother Augustine who had died of plague in the year 1621, in the first monastery built on the site.

Brother Augustine did not seem to realize he was dead. When the canon told him he had passed on many years before, he seemed bewildered. Then he asked the canon to take him to a nearby church, although he either could not or would not materialize so as to become visible. They "took" the unseen specter to the church.

"We went there, said a few prayers, and left Augustine's ghost there," the canon reported later. "A few weeks afterwards his ghost was seen in the church by Mrs. Lazzerini during a Sunday morning service. He was standing near the altar by a flower stand."

On another occasion when the canon and his colleagues went back to the house they held a seance in the living room. The medium spoke in the voice of a distraught girl and also made wailing noises—that of a tiny baby.

Gradually the girl revealed a shocking story. In life she had been employed as a scullery maid in the kitchen monastery. Her name was Annie. A monk named Brother Walter had fathered her baby. To avert a scandal both Annie and her infant daughter had been poisoned and buried in the cellar either by Brother Walter or others.

Like the ghost of Brother Augustine both were "taken" to the church, prayed for, and left there.

During another visit to the house when a seance was held and Page went into a trance he spoke to the canon in the voice of Brother Walter. The monk did not know he had died.

"He was very upset when I told him he was dead and not wanted in the house," the canon reported.

Brother Walter was persuaded to leave the Lazzerini house but he remained earthbound, and continued to haunt the area. Occasionally his ghost visits the home of Donald Page and communicates through the medium. According to the canon he expresses no remorse for the death of his clandestine sweetheart or her baby, but the canon adds: ". . . I believe he is beginning to soften up a bit. In time we hope to free him completely."

The canon discovered the presence of the sixth and last ghost in the house when the sound of the creaking chair was traced to a disused storage room. The chair was rocking and there also was a distinct reek of cheap tobacco.

The unseen ghost occupying the chair was a homeless old vagabond who told the canon that his name was George, and that he had lived in the house when he was alive and the house was supposedly unoccupied. He died about five years before the Lazzerinis moved in and con-

tinued to haunt the room because he had no other place to go.

"We talked him into leaving," said the canon.

But where did "George" and the other ghosts go after leaving the Lazzerini house?

Where do all ghosts go when persuaded by one means or another to leave, or the building they have haunted is demolished?

To the Rev. John D. Pearce-Higgins and his fellow members of the Church of England's Fellowship for Psychic and Spiritual Studies, and to other psychic investigators throughout the world who believe in ghosts, this remains an unfathomed mystery.

Chapter Thirteen

THE ELUSIVE GHOST OF OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN

One of the greatest obstacles to hunting ghosts in the United States is that unlike in England, Germany, Spain and various other countries where haunted castles, cottages, villas and manor houses endure for centuries, American buildings, even if tenanted by a famous specter, are particularly vulnerable to demolition.

Although our government does occasionally designate a historic structure as a national monument, or patriotic organizations take steps to assure its preservation, a haunted house, no matter how authentic it may seem, does not fall into this category.

Most of the ghosts which supposedly haunted buildings in New York City have been evicted since the structures were replaced by less imaginative apartment houses, office skyscrapers or slum clearance projects.

One, on West Thirty-Sixth Street, was an old brownstone, said to be haunted by the imperious ghost of eccentric James A. Harden-Hickey, self-styled James the First of Trinidad, Baron of the Holy Roman Empire.

Harden-Hickey had a grandiose plan to become the

king of the little island of Trinidad—not the well-populated British island, but a small, desolate rocky strip, some seven hundred miles off the coast of Brazil.

He established a "Grande Chancellerie de la Principauté de Trinidad" in the West Thirty-Sixth Street building where his efforts to recruit settlers met with unenthusiastic response. He encountered other discouragements and frustrations until one day in 1898 he committed suicide by taking poison. His ghost supposedly took up residence on the same day he was buried.

Another was John La Farge, the noted American religious artist, who lived at 51 West Tenth Street, the oldest artists' studio building in the United States until it was demolished.

It was here that La Farge painted his masterpiece, *The Ascension.* When his painting was hung in the Church of the Ascension on nearby Fifth Avenue, according to the story, it fell down because he had used so much primer that it was too heavy for its fastenings.

The painting was re-hung, more securely. This time it remained in place until one day, a few years later, it again fell—at the precise moment that La Farge died of a sudden heart attack. After that, until the building was torn down, the ghost of La Farge, a tall, thin specter in black beret, open white shirt, dark trousers and carpet slippers was seen by several of the tenants in the building.

Of the ghosts which still haunt various structures in Manhattan probably the least known—even to the most dedicated ghost hunters—is the specter of Oscar Hammerstein who frequents the old Manhattan Opera House, a cavernous structure at 311 West Thirty-Fourth Street, now called Manhattan Center.

The Manhattan Opera House, its stage long in disuse, is still rented occasionally for an organization rally, a union meeting, a conference. Once, however, it was the scene of some of the dapper little operatic impressario's greatest triumphs.

Here the one-time obscure cigar-maker, who amassed a fortune by inventing a cigar-making machine that revolutionized the industry, produced such widely acclaimed operas as "Pelleas et Melisande," "Louise," and "Elektra" —novelties of his era.

Hammerstein built the Manhattan Opera House in 1906. He later sold it to the Metropolitan Opera Company, which stipulated he was not to produce any more operas in the United States for ten years. He went to England where his London Opera House failed.

Declaring that opera was his life, he returned to New York City and built the American Opera House on Lexington Avenue. The Metropolitan Opera Company then went to court and obtained an injunction to restrain Hammerstein from producing operas. He died in 1919, a year before the restraining order expired.

A theatrical producer friend of mine, Ben Kamsler, told me he had heard that nightly, since his demise, Old Oscar was supposed to sit in a lower right-hand box of the Manhattan Opera House and that with an air of melancholy grandeur he gazed out upon the emptiness of the vast stage, once the scene of his triumphs.

Ben was convinced that if there were any ghosts left in New York City, Hammerstein would certainly be among them, so I decided to find out for myself.

Late one rainy night I knocked at the stage door of the Manhattan Opera House. It was opened by the custodian, Owen O'Rorke. He was short and gray-haired. He spoke in a soft brogue. Before I told him what I wanted, he told me.

"Sure an' you'll be wanting to see Ould Oscar," he said as amiably as if preparing to trot out a family photograph album. "Come in, lad, come in."

He told me that he had been on the job only a few months, replacing a younger man who had left because of shattered nerves. When he applied, the manager had asked if he was afraid of ghosts. O'Rorke had said he wasn't, so he had been hired promptly.

I asked O'Rorke what had so alarmed his predecessor. He pointed to some big, heavy pieces of scenery stacked against the bare brick wall.

"You see them flats? Well, every once in a while this lad who was here before me would find them lying on the stage. He said he never heard any noise when they fell over.

"It seems funny, you know, because it takes at least three strong men to move 'em. I know, because maybe

once a month I find 'em on the stage myself, and the manager has to send in three men to pile 'em against the wall again. I've never heard 'em bang, either, when they fell down."

"Think it could be a poltergeist?"

"A what?" asked O'Rorke.

"A mischievous ghost who tosses things around."

O'Rorke shook his head doubtfully. "If you're meaning by that the ghost of Ould Oscar I don't believe it. He's more the quiet, gentlemanly kind."

"Have you seen his ghost?" I asked.

O'Rorke shook his head. "I don't look for nothing," he answered as he led the way toward the center of the stage, illuminated by a single pilot light, "and so naturally I don't see nothing. Of course I hear strange noises, but then this is a big place.

"Come to think of it, about a month ago there was a Hindu lad came here, same as you. He said he was very much interested in spiritualism. I don't recollect his name but he gave me five dollars—"

O'Rorke paused and coughed delicately. I reached for my wallet and handed him a five-dollar bill.

"Thank you, sir. Well, this Hindu lad wanted to sit in the orchestra near Ould Oscar's favorite box. I left him for about two hours while I was making my rounds. I was coming back when I see him suddenly bolt for the door. He must have seen something that scared the devil out of him."

"He saw the ghost?"

"He saw something," O'Rorke said solemnly. "He never came back. That's where the Hindu sat, and," he added, "before you sit down mebbe you'd like to see the rest of the place. It's time for me to punch the clocks."

I followed him backstage. We picked our way carefully up a winding staircase leading into a huge whitewashed corridor. A turn and more iron stairs. We were high up on sort of a trestle over the stage. Some scenery hanging from the proscenium caught my attention.

"Flash your light over here," I asked.

The beam of O'Rorke's flashlight focused on the canvas. I saw a charcoal sketch of Oscar Hammerstein—an

excellent likeness as if the impressario himself had posed for a talented artist.

"Who did this?" I asked.

"I dunno," answered O'Rorke thoughtfully. "It wasn't there the last time I looked at that scenery and there's nobody been up here since."

We retraced our steps. O'Rorke went back to the little office near the door. I made my way out to the huge stage again, then to the pit stairs. I settled down in the orchestra seat that had been occupied by the anonymous Hindu.

Here I began a vigil, my eyes focused on Hammerstein's favorite box in which were six gilded chairs against a background of heavy drapes.

The box was dimly illumined by the austere rays of the pilot light. It was an eerie scene. The interior of the big opera house with its creaking noises and scampering sounds seemed to me to be conducive to the materialization of a ghost and I waited expectantly. I also realized that lighting conditions were such that my eyes could easily play tricks on me.

I sat there a long time and failed to see anything of a spectral nature. At a quarter to three in the morning I acknowledged defeat and started to leave.

"Seen anything?" O'Rorke asked when I passed his little office.

"No." I shook my head.

"Maybe Ould Oscar's a bit frightened," he suggested. "It could be that the Hindu lad gave him quite a start and he's become wary about being seen by strangers."

It sounded reasonable. I returned the following night and again watched for hours. I came back the next night, and the next. I failed to see the ghost of Oscar Hammerstein materialize.

This, too, is understandable—especially to those who are skeptical or disbelieve in ghosts. However, it fails to explain two physical manifestations that remain a mystery.

Who, or what, sketched the charcoal portrait of Oscar Hammerstein that materialized on the canvas hanging from the proscenium? It most definitely was not Owen O'Rorke, who possessed no artistic ability.

Who, or what, causes the massive flats to topple periodically from against the wall to the stage floor? The fact

that this is done without a loud accompanying bang or thump suggests that they are carefully *lowered,* not pushed over. And this requires much greater strength than possessed by any human being.

Chapter Fourteen

S.S. BAYCHIMO—VANISHING ARCTIC DERELICT

Captain Andrei Bruloff, veteran skipper of the Soviet trawler, *Shelyagin,* was on the bridge on the afternoon of September 8, 1967, when he sighted the *S.S. Baychimo* approximately one hundred and sixty miles northeast of Wainright, Alaska.

He scanned her through his marine glasses across a mile of icy green-gray water of the Arctic Ocean.

"No," he muttered incredulously, "it can't be. Not after all these years."

Summoning the first mate, Leonid Voznessensky, the skipper handed him the marine glasses and asked him to read the lettering on the paint-peeling hull.

"Baychimo," said Voznessensky in surprise and scrutinized her carefully. "No sign of anyone on board."

"Not in many years. I'm going to board her."

Bruloff altered his course and the *Shelyagin* headed toward the *Baychimo*. The trawler traveled for perhaps half a mile when her engines stopped. He spoke into the tube and asked what was the trouble.

"Intake pipe, Comrade Captain," answered engineer Lasnova. "It will require no more than an hour or two to repair."

"Try to hurry it."

For the next two and a half hours, while the engine pipe was being fixed, Bruloff continued to observe the *Baychimo* through his glasses. Both vessels were drifting in a southwesterly direction toward the Beaufort Sea. Within a quarter of an hour it became evident that the *Baychimo* was drifting faster and widening the distance between them.

"You'd think she was being steered by someone at the wheel," commented the mate. "She's holding a straight course."

"Her wheel is probably lashed," said Bruloff, glancing in growing irritation at the sky.

Dark, low-hanging cloud were gathering, presaging a snow squall.

It began to snow about half an hour before the trawler was able to get under way again. Thick, heavy flakes fell, reducing visibility to near zero, obliterating the *Baychimo*.

Bruloff decided to abandon the chase temporarily. Remaining straight on course, there was danger of colliding with the *Baychimo* somewhere ahead.

For the next two and a half hours the trawler rode out the snow squall, her engines scarcely maintaining headway. Then the skies cleared and in the late afternoon there was between four and five miles of visibility. There was, however, no sign of the *Baychimo*.

Shortly before six p.m. the frustrated Captain Bruloff radioed a sighting report to the Soviet air base at Ostrov Vrangelya (Wrangel Island). Within minutes a Soviet Air Force Antonov AN-12, with a crew of five was in the air, her four turboprops driving her to the area where the *Baychimo* had last been seen.

The Antonov failed to find any trace of the *Baychimo*. Once again she had vanished in the far reaches of the waters and ice floes above the Arctic Circle.

Captain Bruloff was greatly disappointed, but by no means surprised, for the same thing has been going on for almost four decades. Every once in a while the *Baychimo* had been sighted. On a few occasions she had even been boarded. But always something has happened to forestall taking her into any port.

"I do not believe in psychic phenomena of any kind," said Captain Bruloff. "When one commands a vessel in the Arctic, one deals in matters of realism. Icebergs, floes, pack ice, blizzards—these are the known factors one must contend with in the Arctic—and usually they are too imminent to be concerned about anything supernatural.

"The *Baychimo*, however, is unlike any derelict I have seen, or heard about anywhere. She has defied raging polar storms. She has avoided being trapped in crushing pack

ice. She acts as though she has a will of her own, as if she desires to roam the ocean free of any human agency."

Many a ship's officer and seaman—American, Soviet and Canadian—who voyage into the Arctic and know the bizarre history of the *Baychimo* agree with Bruloff.

She was built in 1919-1920 for the Hudson's Bay Company, which owns and operates a number of vessels in far northern waters.

Originally based at Vancouver, British Columbia, the *Baychimo* was sent north in 1921 as a replacement for one of the company's schooners, the *Lady Kindersley,* which was caught and crushed in pack ice near Mackenzie Bay.

The *Baychimo* was commanded by Captain John Cornwall and manned by a crew of sixteen seamen. She visited remote trading posts and Eskimo villages in the Beaufort Sea-M'Clure Strait-McClintock Channel regions between the mainland and Prince of Wales Island. Her cargo consisted principally of food, fuel and lumber supplies outbound and bales of valuable fur, catches collected at various posts, on her return voyages.

On October 1, 1931, Captain Cornwall was bringing the *Baychimo* back from one of these collecting trips with almost a million dollars worth of fur pelts in her hold when a blizzard was encountered, howling south from the Chuckchee Sea.

Cornwall headed the ship for Wainwright on the Alaskan mainland, but the storm got worse and worse, forcing him to make directly towards the mainland some seventy or more miles above Wainwright, between Icy Cape and Point Lay.

Pack ice, augmented by floes, grew thicker as the ship approached. She was about two miles from the desolate shore when she was caught and held in the ice pack.

Cornwall and his crew spent an anxious night, hoping to free the *Baychimo* the next day. In the morning it became apparent that she was hopelessly trapped and could not be released until the spring thaw set in. Moreover, it was a question as to whether she would survive until spring, for the pack ice, continuously driving shoreward, threatened to crush her.

On the third day Cornwall decided it had become too

hazardous to remain aboard any longer. Two hand-drawn sledges were put over the side, loaded with food and other supplies and he led his crew toward safer ice near shore. It proved to be a dangerous journey across open leads and treacherous, snow-hidden cracks in the ice.

They made camp within sight of the *Baychimo* and two seamen were sent to the nearest Eskimo village, some forty miles away, to obtain dog teams and drivers to take the entire party to Wainwright after unloading the furs from the ship.

Several days passed—then weeks—and there was no sign of the dog teams. As it developed later, the two seamen lost their way and were found suffering from exposure and frostbite by Eskimo seal hunters.

On the night of November 2, a storm blowing in from the south brought with it a rise in temperature. A disturbing surprise was in store for Cornwall when he woke up on the following morning. The *Baychimo* no longer was where he had last seen it. In fact, it was nowhere in evidence on the sullen horizon. The temperature rise had caused a wide lead to open in the ice directly to the trapped ship.

Sometime during the night the *Baychimo* had freed herself, drifted along the lead and vanished out on the sea.

This was the final discouragement to Cornwall and his crew. They broke camp and started on a long and arduous trudge to Wainwright. Later they were taken to Point Barrow and flown back to Canada.

Almost a month went by. Then an Eskimo hunter, Joe Togtoq, sighted the *Baychimo* in the ice near his village north of Point Lay. She had drifted at least fifty miles from the point where Cornwall and his men abandoned her.

Togtoq and other Eskimos with dog teams journeyed across the pack ice and began removing the furs from the *Baychimo*. In the course of the next two weeks they made a number of hazardous trips between the ship and their village. They succeeded in unloading about a third of the cargo, losing two dog teams, three Eskimos and several bales of fur in the process.

On the fifteenth day they again set out from the village. To their surprise the *Baychimo* had disappeared.

"We could not understand why," Togtoq later told the Hudson's Bay Company official to whom the furs were returned. "There was no change in the weather. No big wind. Nothing."

From then on the elusive derelict was sighted in various regions of the Arctic. Among them were Herschell Island near the mainland, Cape Lisburne in the Chuckchee Sea, near Cape Manning on Prince Patrick Island, and Minto Head at the northern end of McClintock Channel.

One of the most dramatic of these incidents occurred in mid-1933 when the *Baychimo* was spotted by Eskimo seal hunters, several miles northeast of Point Barrow.

Some thirty of the Eskimos paddled out to her in their kayaks and climbed aboard. They were caught for eleven days in a blizzard—which they believed had been brought by the ship. When they finally abandoned her, five of the Eskimos were drowned before the others succeeded in paddling back to shore.

In 1934 the *Baychimo* was sighted by the Canadian schooner *Trader*. She was boarded late in the afternoon and after an inspection, it was decided to transfer the remainder of her cargo and other salvageable contents to the schooner on the following day. During the night she was allowed to drift with the *Trader* standing by. This turned out to be a mistake, for when dawn broke the *Baychimo* could not be found.

From then on the derelict has been occasionally seen in various regions above the Arctic Circle by trawlers, schooners, weather ships, and twice by USAF planes en route to Greenland. The last reported sighting was made by Captain Bruloff, the skipper of the trawler *Shelyagin,* in 1967.

Oceanographers, marine scientists, Arctic explorers, and others familiar with the polar seas and severe weather, cannot explain the uncanny behavior of the *Baychimo,* nor how she has succeeded in roaming the seas these many years without being wrecked or permanently trapped in the ice pack.

Even stranger is her ability to disappear, sometimes for many months, between sightings.

The National Geographic Society, no believer in the

supernormal, has commented in its *Bulletin* that "she always eludes capture."

As expressed by Captain Bruloff: "The *Baychimo* acts as though she has a will of her own . . ."

Chapter Fifteen

"WRITTEN IN THE STARS"

Can a person's future be foretold from the position of the stars and other heavenly bodies in conjunction with the date, and more precisely the hour, of his birth?

The question has been argued for centuries, ever since about 650 B.C. when the Babylonians began to "read the stars" and develop the art of astrology, which spread to Greece, to Rome, and then throughout the world.

Today millions of people believe that astrology is a real if unexplainable cosmic phenomenon, and in the United States this belief is attested both by the increasing number of astrologers who cast individual horoscopes—for a fee—and the popularity of astrology books, magazines and newspaper columns.

Astrology also has its numerous nonbelievers, the most disparaging of whom are astronomers, who refuse to acknowledge that their science originated in "reading the stars" for forecasting the future.

Astrology likewise has its skeptics and its converts who, like Edgar Clark a thirty-three-year-old New York automobile salesman, learn by personal experience that "there must be something to it."

Clark's conversion came about on a March morning in 1968 following breakfast with his wife, Marianne, a faithful reader of the horoscope column in their morning newspaper.

"Please be careful today, dear," she urged. "You're a Pisces and it says here that people born under the sign of Pisces should take extra precautions to guard themselves against accidents."

"I'll be careful, honey," Clark promised, and added with a grin: "That horoscope stuff is for the birds. No

one can predict the future by reading cards, tea leaves or the stars."

At eight forty-five that morning Clark left his midtown apartment for his usual six-block walk to the automobile showroom on Broadway where he was employed.

Five minutes later a stone coping, weighing half a ton, broke loose from a seven-story building. It crashed to the sidewalk near him.

Shaken by this close call, Clark walked another block and stepped from the sidewalk to the street. As he did so, a teen-age driver ignored a traffic light and sped on, narrowly missing him.

Now unnerved by this second near accident, Clark paused in indecision. Just coincidence, he told himself, and continued toward the showroom.

At nine a.m. he was almost at the door when he tripped over a loose grating and fell. He was taken to the hospital with a fracture of the right leg.

Edgar Clark now believes in astrology as firmly as does his wife. His conversion came about swiftly, in approximately a quarter of an hour.

Some of his friends scoff at him and tell him, erroneously, that he is "superstitious." They argue that his first near accident was sheer coincidence, that it made him so jittery he did not see the oncoming car nor the loose grating.

Clark is no longer predisposed to argue. He conscientiously reads his horoscope every morning before leaving the house.

Some persons have even a closer brush with death. Among them are Dennis Karnatz, 32, a Seattle, Washington, elevator installer. After suffering a fractured skull, broken legs, a ruptured spleen and a shattered left arm which required amputation, his survival from an accident on January 23, 1968, is regarded by surgeons who attended him as a medical miracle.

Karnatz was working on the twelfth floor of the steel framework of the Seattle First National Bank Building on that eventful day. It was almost lunchtime. He remembers what happened:

"It was fate. It was in my unlucky stars. I had a funny feeling that morning that something was wrong. My land-

lady, or somebody, said maybe I shouldn't work that day. I went anyway. I started on the job feeling something was going to happen.

"I stepped onto the plywood platform, a covering over the elevator shaft about a half inch thick. I was getting my safety belt ready to hook up when somebody yelled, 'Look out!'

"A big plank, two-by-twelve and about seventeen feet long hit me on the head and smashed my steel helmet. The guys around me told me the impact drove me through the plywood, and that's when I lost my arm.

"Somewhere along the way I bounced off a steel beam and landed at the fourth-floor level of the shaft. My arm was nearly off at the shoulder, hanging by a thread.

"The guys told me I tried to raise myself up and was cussing. At fate, I guess. But I don't remember anything after being hit on the head.

"I'm lucky my back wasn't broken when I hit the beam. I must have landed on my feet because the bones in both legs were as mixed up as a jigsaw puzzle."

For just one more unusual case consider that of Jack Margerison, 43, a London, England, window cleaner, who read the horoscope in his newspaper daily, ignored three warnings and had three accidents. He read the first warning on January 2, 1963. This is how he tells the story:

"I always read the stars. It's been a habit for years but I don't let them guide my life.

"It was snowing on that January morning and I had to wait around the house before going out to work. I sat in the living room drinking a cup of tea and reading the morning newspaper.

"I flicked straight to the horoscope column and looked under my sign, Libra. My birthdate is October 8. There was a warning: 'Watch your health.'

"I turned to the sports pages and didn't think any more about it. A couple of hours later I propped my ladder against a window and was just starting to work when the ladder slipped on the icy ground and I fell."

Margerison was taken to the General Hospital and treated for a fractured wrist. Four months later he read

the same warning in the horoscope column and again he ignored it.

"I shrugged my shoulders," he said. "Later that day I was working again on a ladder. Suddenly a cat came racing around the corner and dashed under the bottom rung. A split second later a dog followed. He was so big he knocked my ladder, and me, flying.

"I landed on the pavement. I thought immediately about the horoscope. Was there something to it after all?"

Margerison had fourteen weeks for further reflection in the hospital where he was treated for four broken ribs and another fracture of his left wrist.

On March 25, 1968, he was at breakfast, reading his horoscope as was his habit. Under the sign of Libra was the same ominous warning. "Watch your health!"

"But I still wouldn't believe there was anything to it," he said. "I went off to work.

"I was almost through for the day when I came to a house with upstairs windows to clean. I used my twenty-foot extension ladder, and was standing on it about fifteen feet up, when suddenly the lower half of the ladder cracked.

"It split in two pieces. I fell into a flower bed, which probably cushioned my fall a bit."

He was taken to the hospital where he was treated for arm and leg injuries.

Now Jack Margerison, like so many other skeptics, has been converted and has joined the millions who staunchly believe that what astrologers see written in the stars will come to pass.

But as in so many unsolved, age-old mysteries of our universe the question remains: why?

Chapter Sixteen

ENIGMA OF THE RED SEA EXODUS

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land and the waters were divided. Exodus 14:21

No episode related in the Bible is more dramatic, nor to this day causes more speculation among archeologists than the escape of Moses and the children of Israel from Pharaoh's pursuing army.

Was it a double miracle when the sea parted to permit the Israelites to flee to safety, after which: ". . . the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them."?

Or did some unexplained and never-again recorded natural phenomenon occur during that period in the thirteenth century B.C. when most archeologists agree that the exodus took place?

The enigma not only has remained unsolved through the centuries but an increasing number of scientists, geographers and Bible scholars are convinced that the flight of the Israelites from Egypt did not follow a route across the Red Sea.

They point out that when the Bible was translated into many languages from the original Hebrew the name of the sea was interpreted as the *Red* Sea and has been widely accepted as such ever since. But, they now say, *Reed* Sea is a much more accurate translation and there are many areas with reedy marshes in the Nile Delta which have been locally called "reed seas" for centuries and it is possible that the Bible referred to one of these.

"It should also be remembered that Moses was one of the great strategists of his time," says the noted Israeli archeologist Benjamin Mittman. "He realized that his people would be pursued by the army of the wrathful Pharaoh when they fled. He also realized that if they tried to escape by one of the usual caravan routes such as the Way of the Philistines they would soon be overtaken.

"It is probable, therefore, that in preparation for the exodus Moses planned an escape route through a Reed Sea, that he and his people traveled safely through the marshy terrain but the pursuing Egyptians, mounted on horses or riding in heavy chariots, found the marsh a trap in which they sank to their deaths."

Adding to this theory Dr. Mittman points out that there is geographical vagueness to the Biblical account.

"The Bible mentions numerous places where the Israelites camped during their forty years of wandering in the Sinai Desert," he says, "but neither the topography nor landmarks are described in sufficient detail to give clues to their location.

"In Exodus, Chapter Fourteen, for example, one reads that the Lord advised Moses to tell the children of Israel to 'encamp before Pihahiroth between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-Zephon: Before it ye shall encamp by the sea.'

"Some archeologists believe that Migdol was several miles north of what is now Qantara. Others theorize it may well have been Qantara itself.

"As for permanent landmarks. The Bible mentions Mount Sinai as one. Yet there are at least a dozen mountains known as Mount Sinai."

When the Sinai peninsula was occupied by the Israelis in 1956, scientists tried to trace the route taken by the Israelites during the Exodus. Despite the Biblical account they found themself frustrated. They were unable to find either the site of the crossing of the Red Sea or the route taken thereafter.

They succeeded only in pinpointing two encampments. One was Kadesh Barnea, the most fertile and well-watered oasis in the north. The other was the border entrance to the Promised Land, the Land of Canaan, which is now the Israeli frontier.

"We were unable to discover any Israelite artifacts at supposed campsites," says Dr. Avraham Diran, director of the Department of Antiquities. "But the absence of specific traces is to be expected. The children of Israel were living a fairly nomadic existence. They could have used wooden bowls, skin flasks and lived in tents, none of which would provide remains after a span of some thirty-three centuries. Not finding pottery doesn't necessarily mean that the Israelites were not there."

When the Israelis again occupied the Sinai Peninsula in 1967, following the 'lightning war' several scientific expeditions tried to locate the site of the Red Sea crossing and the route taken during the forty years of wandering.

Currently they have two theories. One is that Moses led the Israelites out of their bondage in Egypt by a

northern route from Qantara through the Wilderness of Shur, parallel to the Mediterranean Sea and past what is now El' Arish.

Another faction believe that the Israelites might have traveled southward from Qantara in a wide arc, followed the Gulf of Suez coast and then crossed the Wilderness of Etham and the Wilderness of Sin, turning northeast on reaching Mount Sinai—the one that is called Mount Horeb. From here, they maintain, the Israelites wandered up to Elath at the end of the Gulf of Aqaba and then through the Wilderness of Paran to the oasis of Kadesh Barnea.

"Archeologists hope some day to determine which of these routes was taken by the children of Israel," says Dr. Mittman. "If and when they do they may also find the key to the thirty-three-century-old enigma of the exodus.

"Did the waters of the Red Sea really part to permit the safe crossing of the fleeing Israelites?

"We wonder . . ."

Chapter Seventeen

THE PASSENGER WHO VANISHED IN THIN AIR

Among the twenty-three passengers on a Purdue Aviation Corporation-chartered DC-3 flying from Kankakee, Illinois, to Dallas, Texas, to attend a Lion's Club convention on June 29, 1968, were Jerrold I. Potter and his wife, Carrie.

They both had been looking forward to the trip for a long time. Potter, a successful fifty-four-year-old Pontiac, Illinois, insurance executive, besides being a member of the Lions, belonged to the Moose, the Elks and the Chamber of Commerce. Affable, outgoing, in the best of health, and with two married daughters and a happy home life, he was not at all the type a movie or TV director would select to play the lead in a bizarre drama.

For an hour after takeoff the Potters, occupying seats toward the rear of the plane, gazed down upon the rolling

foothills of the Ozarks, commenting upon the smoothness of the flight and the panorama unfolding eight thousand feet below.

The DC-3 was north of Rolla, Missouri, approaching the Fort Leonard Wood Camp area, when Potter decided to go to the lavatory. His wife saw him start towards the compartment near the tail of the plane and pause on the way to exchange chit-chat with some of his friends.

One of them was James Schaive, president of the Ottawa, Illinois, Lions Club. Potter stopped briefly to say hello to Schaive and then continued on his way to the lavatory.

A few minutes went by. Then, unaccountably, the DC-3 jolted, as if it had bumped over an invisible obstacle in its flight path. The plane recovered almost immediately and there was no panic among the passengers.

"It just suddenly happened," Schaive later explained. "There was a noise, the plane sort of quivered a little bit. There was a rush of air."

Mrs. Potter looked back on the aisle for her husband. Failing to see him, she became uneasy and asked one of the two stewardesses to check the lavatory.

Up forward in the cockpit pilot Miguel Raul Cabeza noticed that a red 'door open' warning light had flashed on. He asked his co-pilot, Roy Bacus to make a check.

As he walked toward the rear of the plane Bacus encountered one of the stewardesses, concern written on her attractive face.

"I think a passenger is missing. Mr. Potter."

"You sure?" Bacus' face mirrored her concern.

"He was near the lavatory compartment when the plane quivered. He isn't in there now and no one has seen him since."

In the aisle between the empty lavatory and the rear door which was ajar, Bacus spotted a small section of chain, picked it up and hurried forward to the cockpit where he informed Cabeza of Potter's disappearance.

"I found this piece of safety chain," he added. "Also the exit door was partly open."

"Good Lord! Maybe Potter was thrown against the door when the plane jolted, the chain was snapped by his weight and he fell out!"

"No one saw him fall. He simply disappeared."

If Potter had fallen out of the door it was an extraordinary kind of accident which had but one precedent.

Eighteen years before, on February 11, 1950, ex-paratrooper Marc Fischer-Galati, a steward on an Eastern Airlines DC-3 had plunged out of a closed door under almost identical circumstances.

The steward had survived almost miraculously. When he was jerked out of the plane and the safety chain snapped, the part still attached somehow had become wrapped around his right leg and he had also managed to hold on to the door handle. He was still gripping it tightly when the plane descended more than twenty-five hundred feet and landed at the Miami airport.

Pilot Cabeza reported by radio that he was changing his course, detailed the nature of the emergency and headed the DC-3 for the nearest airport, Springfield, Missouri, a distance of one hundred miles.

When his plane touched down it was found that the door was still ajar and the stairs were locked in the down position. Unlike the case of Steward Fischer-Galati, however, there was no sign of Potter.

How could this tragedy have occurred? There is no logical explanation.

Potter certainly did not commit suicide. He was a happy man on a holiday—as testified to by fellow passengers with whom he had conversed only minutes before he disappeared.

It is difficult to believe that he had made a mistake and opened the exit door instead of the one to the lavatory. The exit door bore a warning in large white letters on a red background: *Do not open while in flight.* In addition to a safety chain at the top, the door which was hinged at the top, was secured by a large, heavy handle which had to be turned one hundred and eighty degrees to release two sturdy, bayonet-type plunger bolts.

Said Grove Webster, president of Purdue Aviation Corporation, one of several officials who made an investigation: "It would take a concentrated effort to open the door during the flight.

"The door was locked securely on takeoff. You can

stand in the doorway of a DC-3 in flight and not be sucked out. The plane is not pressurized.

"And to open the door takes a lot of effort. Crews close the door for our stewardesses and open it. And it is harder to open and close in flight than on the ground. Some of our smaller stewardesses actually have a difficult time opening the door."

Some months later Potter's family lawyers filed an eight hundred thousand dollar damage suit against the airline in behalf of his widow, Carrie. They argued that the airline was negligent in its maintenance and failed to follow safety procedure.

But although there were twenty-two other passengers and two stewardesses in the cabin during the tragic flight there were no actual eyewitnesses. No one saw him plummet through the door to his death, eight thousand feet below.

And though the area of the Ozark Mountains where he is presumed to have fallen has been carefully searched, foot by foot, no trace of his corpse has ever been found.

Jerrold I. Potter, late of Pontiac, Illinois, is a man who literally vanished in thin air.

Chapter Eighteen

THE LOUP-GAROU TERROR

Dennis Dupais, thirty-six-year-old Montreal geologist, was prospecting for uranium between the Yellowknife and the Coppermine rivers on a November morning in 1967 when he caught a fleeting glimpse of a wolverine.

A few minutes later he slipped on the smooth surface of a forty-foot-high outcrop of rock, his legs shot out from under him, and he slid downward.

He came to a jarring stop at the bottom of the outcrop, flat on his back and staring upward at the snow-laden sky. His right ankle was wedged beneath a fallen log as firmly as if caught in the jaws of a bear trap.

Hot pain lanced his leg when he vainly tried to free his

foot. He knew from the feel of it that there was no break. It probably was no more than a sprained ankle, but the log would not give an inch and he began to worry that a snowstorm might catch him four miles from his cabin without snowshoes.

He crouched forward and cut away at the log with his hunting knife. He was making slow progress a quarter of an hour later when two Cree trappers came into sight.

Dupais breathed a sigh of relief and called out to them to move the log from his foot. They halted and stared in angry silence at the Geiger counter which had fallen from his hands.

This wasn't like Crees. They are friendly to white men, quick to help in trouble.

"Come on," Dupais prompted, "lift the log from my foot."

One of the Crees handed his rifle to the other and picked up a heavy rock. He raised it above his head. Suddenly frightened, Dupais saw murder in the cold, dark eyes and called out.

"Wait! What are you doing. I am your friend!"

"No friend." The Indian spoke slowly and deliberately. "You bring loup-garou out of ground with your box of bad magic. Many loup-garou are robbing traps. Steal fur catch. Crees starve."

Dupais screamed when the Cree threw the rock. He raised his arms to protect his head.

The Cree aimed for the Geiger counter. The rock smashed it to pieces.

Dupais' relief at his escape from death was mixed with swift-growing anger and indignation.

"When the Mounties and the Indian Agent at Yellowknife hear about this—" he began and then stopped. The Crees were moving quickly towards the river.

It took more than an hour for Dupais to free his foot. He limped back towards his cabin, and when he approached it three hours later it was beginning to snow. He saw something gleaming on the ground in the milky half-light and he picked it up. "Potage de Pois," he read on the label, one of the cans of soup he had stored in his cabin.

Closer to the cabin he picked up a second can. The

cabin door was wide open and the snow was swirling in. Even before he entered he smelt the thick, musky scent of a wolverine, and when he limped inside the odor was overpowering. No animal has as strong and nauseating a scent gland as the wolverine. That of a skunk is as sweet as barbershop hair tonic in comparison.

Dupais lit a match and reached for the oil lamp on the table. The glass chimney lay in shattered bits. The floor was covered with a litter of flour, sugar, powdered milk and salt, the cartons gnawed and ripped apart. There wasn't a can of food or coffee in the cabin. The wolverines had taken every can away and probably scattered them widely in the bush out of sheer vindictiveness.

This had required time. And the wolverine had *known* that it had plenty of time, that Dupais would not return to the cabin for several hours.

Of all the animals on earth none is more dreaded than the wolverine. The early French Canadians called it the loup-garou after the legendary European werewolf and the name has remained in the North Country to this day. North of the Arctic Circle the Eskimos fear it as greatly as do the Indians and they do not even mention it by name. They refer to it in whispers as "It."

The wolverine is the most destructive, ferocious and cunning among all animals. It hates everyone including others of its own species. A male and female tolerate each other only when mating, after which they again go their separate ways.

Although a full grown wolverine weighs only from twenty-two to twenty-five pounds, he is the most fearless as well as elusive of animals. He'll attack a moose or even a grizzly and fight until he's killed. When he's very hungry he does not hesitate to devour a porcupine, quills and all, though he'll die soon thereafter.

He's a night prowler, a sneak, a cunning robber of traps. Even worse, surrounded as he is by legend and superstition the wolverine in a "loup-garou year" causes incitement to murder. Like many other species of Canadian fur-bearing animals the wolverine follows fairly regular cycles when his numbers increase.

It is difficult to convince an Indian or an Eskimo of this, however. He believes that when a loup-garou is in

the area it is because someone made bad medicine. If more appear it becomes a "loup-garou year" and drastic steps must be taken immediately lest the tribe be visited by some calamity.

In one such instance Eskimos living south of the Coppermine decided that two Oblate missionaries, Father William Le Roux and Father John Baptist Rouvierre, were responsible for attracting loup-garou to the district. A hunting party led by Eskimos named Sinnisiak and Ulusek ambushed the priests near Bloody Falls, cut out their livers and ate them to protect themselves against the evil spells of the loup-garou.

In another instance a Cree medicine man was told by the "spirit" of a loup-garou that only a triple human sacrifice would appease it. He persuaded a Cree family to drown their three children in the Yellowknife to prevent the loup-garou from casting a starvation spell upon their village.

In still another instance a loup-garou ordered an Eskimo named Alikomiak to kill white men lest he and all his people be stricken by a fatal sickness. The Eskimo ran amok and shot Otto Binder, a fur trader, and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Corporal A. W. Doak to death.

The Crees have a saying to the effect that it is easier to build a new cabin after a visit by a loup-garou than to try to clean up the old one.

During the next twelve days, snowbound in his cabin, and treating his injured ankle, Dupais did try to clean up.

"I scraped up the stuff from the floor and made flapjacks of a sort," he related later. "But as a steady diet, a mixture of flour, sugar, salt, powdered milk, dirt and other sweepings flavored with the overpowering stench of wolverine wasn't only monotonous but sickening as well. I cursed the loup-garou with every meal I ate.

"As the snowstorm abated, my apprehension increased. The superstitious Crees believed I was responsible for bringing the loup-garou into the district. If it continued robbing their trap lines they might come gunning for me. I decided that somehow I would have to get rid of the wolverine before that happened."

When Dupais was well enough to walk, he snowshoed to the river, caught a two-pound fish and doctored it with

fox poison. He left the fish in front of his cabin door at night and in the morning he found the over-large tracks of the wolverine in the snow, leading to the fish, which had not been touched.

"I found it hard to believe that the loup-garou had any psychic intuition, but of one thing I became convinced," said Dupais. "It knew I was out to kill it and it showed equal determination to make a fool of me. It did, too, in half a dozen different ways.

"While I was laying traps for it some distance away, it again broke into my cabin, gnawing through the door. It did a methodical job of wanton destruction, even slashing my bunk blankets and caribou robe to ribbons.

"I baited traps with the meat of a deer I shot. I put out poisoned meat. I tried other tricks to trap or kill the wolverine. None of them worked.

"This developed into a personal feud between us which lasted for many weeks."

One day on towards spring, Dupais caught what had been a valuable silver fox in a trap. The loup-garou had been there ahead of him, however. He had disemboweled and ripped the fox to pieces in a mad frenzy.

And then Dupais discovered something which made his eyes round with incredulity. The trap had been reset!

The tracks of the wolverine led to the trap, and then away from it. The trail was clearly shown in the soft snow. But aside from the tracks Dupais had made with his own snowshoes it was plain that the trap had not been visited by another human being.

"There can be but one explanation," said Dupais. "The trap, sprung by the silver fox had been reset by the wolverine—a seeming impossibility."

Had the wolverine somehow reset the trap by accident while tearing the fox to shreds?

Or did it, just before its final disappearance, deliberately show its ability to reset the trap as a gesture of contempt for Dennis Dupais?

Zoologists and other scientists still have a lot more to learn about the mysterious wolverine before anyone can satisfactorily answer the question.

Chapter Nineteen

BEE MAN EXTRAORDINARY

There is a rare and unique understanding between Albert B. "Tib" Tibbets and all honeybees. He regards them more as friends than insects and he seldom has been stung even by the angriest of bees.

When a swarm of bees suddenly descends upon an alarmed household in upper Westchester or Putnam County in New York, causing the occupants to flee in panic, the State Police think first of "Tib" as best qualified to handle the problem.

For years he has volunteered his services without charge in many such emergencies. He has removed thousands of bees from trees, shrubbery, attics, cellars, walls, chimneys and, on one occasion, from the fireplace in the historic house which at one time was the home of President Ulysses S. Grant in North Salem, N.Y. In so doing he has found new and better locations for their hives. At times he has adopted them himself.

A former New York City newspaperman and advertising executive now living on his apple and blueberry farm in Croton Falls, N.Y., Tib has had a genuine fondness for bees since his boyhood days in Lincoln, Neb. His interest deepened as he grew up and he became one of the world's authorities. His book, "The First Book of Bees" has been translated into many languages and the Arabic version is used as a textbook for beekeepers in several countries in the Middle East.

"Strange as it may seem, the honeybee is one of the oldest as well as one of our most important domesticated 'animals.' It has been associated with man for more than four thousand years," Tib explains.

"Down through the centuries the honeybee has adapted readily to manmade houses ranging from hives of twisted straw or hollowed logs to modern apiaries. Left to themselves, however, they will readily abandon these hives and revert to hollow trees such as was the custom of wild honeybees thousands of years ago.

"Swarming occurs when bees get too crowded in a hive. Then a large number of them fill themselves up with

honey and leave all at once. As the swarming bees rush from the hive they circle around in the air, all together, often making as much noise as an airplane engine. Sometimes the queen leads the swarm. At other times she joins it after about half the swarming bees have left the hive.

"The bees draw closer and closer together while circling. Finally they settle down temporarily on something like a tree branch, where they hang all together like a big bunch of bananas.

"Bees who act as scouts then leave the cluster and go out searching for a new home. At times the scout-bees even start looking for a new home before the swarming begins. Wherever they look, whatever place they may select, they have some mysterious way of getting the other bees to follow them."

It is usually when the bee swarm is settled in its new home, or afterward, that Tib is sent for.

Most swarmings, as he points out, are logically explainable. Once in a while, though, he responds to a bee emergency which has a bizarre undertone.

"One afternoon I received a telephone call from an agitated superintendent of a cemetery in Putnam County," he said.

"It seems that an old dairy farmer named Zachary had died and was to be buried that day. The preparations had been made, the grave dug and an open tent erected over it for the final services.

"Zachary had an apiary near his barn. While the funeral cortege was forming, the bees appeared to be greatly disturbed and circled around their hives. Then, after the last car with mourners departed, they took off for the cemetery too.

"One of the queerest things about this was that they did not follow the cortege along the highway. They flew in a straight line to the cemetery. They flew as if they knew exactly where it was.

"When the cortege arrived there were thousands of bees ahead of it. Some where settling down on a willow tree near the burial site. Some were clustered on nearby tombstones. One big cluster was in the tent, hanging from the top of the pole."

Tib hurried to the cemetery and witnessed the fantastic sight. Usually he waits until darkness sets in before attempting to gather bees, but on this occasion it turned out to be unnecessary.

The bees made no attempt to molest the mourners. They remained quietly where they were during the services and while the coffin was lowered into the grave. Then they rose and flew in a direct line back to their apiary.

Several months later Tib had an almost identical experience when called to another cemetery where a huge swarm of bees temporarily infested the burial site of their dead keeper. They, too, flew back to their hives after the coffin was lowered into the grave.

At this point Tib began to investigate the phenomena. Had anything like this ever happened before?

In the newspaper files of the *New York Times,* he came upon a story about the funeral of a beekeeper named John Zepka in Adams, Massachusetts, on April 28, 1956. Reported by an Associated Press correspondent, it began:

"A strange tradition from the forgotten rural years when almost every family kept bees, was startlingly recalled after the death of John Zepka."

The story then detailed the tradition. Honeybees, in a unique insect way, have a feeling of affection for the one who takes care of them. When a beekeeper, or a member of his family, dies, a strip of black cloth must be draped on each hive. If this respect for the dead is not shown, the bees became agitated, swarm into a funeral cortege and fly to the burial site to mourn.

Researching further, Tib found that the old tradition was mentioned by two American poets, Eugene Field and John Greenleaf Whittier.

"I cannot explain it," said Tib, "nor would I have believed it if I had not seen it myself."

Chapter Twenty

THE CONTROVERSIAL SASQUATCH

Stalking silently through a stand of timber near Cady Pass in the Washington Cascades, Frank Kaleson halted abruptly and raised his rifle.

The fantastic game he had trailed to the bank of the Little Wenatchee River lined up in the sights of his .30-06, a perfect target at seventy-five yards.

It was a giant of a mammal, approximately seven and a half feet tall and weighing at least four-hundred pounds. It stood on two bowed legs, long, ape-like arms extending almost to knees from sloping shoulders. Its entire body was covered with reddish fur. Its eyes, small and dark, stared at Kaleson from under thick, blackish hair. Its features were more human than animal, with a broad, flattish nose and protruding lips and chin.

Frozen by surprise, Kaleson and the monster faced each other for perhaps five seconds. Then, after emitting a loud sound that was either a snort or a grunt, the Sasquatch retreated along the riverbank. Moving quickly, with a queer elephantine gait, it soon disappeared in the thickness of the bush.

Some weeks later, when I interviewed Kaleson in his San Francisco home, I asked him why he had not fired at the Sasquatch on that November morning in 1967.

"When I discovered the tracks about a mile from the Little Wenatchee I first thought they were bear tracks," he explained. "They were about fifteen inches long, seven inches across the ball of the foot and they left an impression between an inch and a half and two inches in depth, indicating considerable weight. The more I studied them the more I became convinced that they hadn't been made by a bear. I'm familiar with the tracks left by a black or a grizzly and I've hunted the big browns on the Kenai Peninsula. I knew it wasn't any of these.

"Stories about the monster Sasquatch came to mind when I began to follow the tracks. Actually, I did not expect to see one, for I had never believed the stories. Then, when I caught up with the monster, I couldn't believe my eyes.

"I brought up my rifle instinctively. It was purely a protective action. I couldn't bring myself to shoot. Not unless I was attacked. That monster looked so much like some sort of primitive human being that I felt I'd be guilty of murder if I killed it, except in self defense."

So it was that Kaleson, one of the few men to have confronted a Sasquatch at close quarters, like the others, was unable to secure conclusive proof of its existence.

To most people who do not live in the northwest, the Sasquatch, if they have heard about it at all, is a fantastic legend, comparable to those about the Abominable Snowman or Yeti of the remote Himalayas.

How in this day and age, they ask incredulously, could such a monstrous giant inhabit any region of the United States or Canada without being captured and classified by anthropologists?

To many inhabitants of the northwest, however, both Indians and whites, the Sasquatch, also called the Big Foot, the Wauk-Wauk and the Saske-havis, is very real; a mysterious, elusive species of humanoid, somewhere between Homo sapiens and the ape family, who has evaded contact with civilization and capture to this day.

Believers point out that there are many areas in the northwest, particularly above northern California-Nevada, which are sparsely settled, heavily timbered, and apparently a favorable environment for the Sasquatch.

For further evidence they offer many plaster casts of tracks discovered in various parts of this region. The casts show huge prints of bare feet with the second toe longer than the first, or big toe.

Indians of the northwest told stories about the great size of the Sasquatch and their enormous strength to the earliest pioneers. Many of these accounts appear in the diaries and journals of white settlers who, in reporting sightings, indicated that the Sasquatch were shy and non-aggressive. Some mentioned that they were apparently vegetarian, that they had been observed eating roots and berries, and that on occasion they had been seen raiding settlers' vegetable gardens.

As far as can be determined the only recorded capture of a Sasquatch occurred in 1884 when "a creature who may truly be called half man and half beast" was caught

on the right of way of the Canadian Pacific by several members of a train crew including the conductor, R. J. Craig, and the engineer, Ned Austin.

The captive was evidently a young, half-grown Sasquatch who had wandered down to the tracks and become terrified at the sight and noise of an approaching train. As related in the *Daily British Colonist* of July 4, 1884:

"Jacko, as the creature has been called, is something of the gorilla type, standing about four feet, seven inches in height and weighing one-hundred-twenty-seven pounds. He has long, black, strong hair and resembles a human being with one exception: his entire body is covered with glossy hair about one inch long. His forearm is much longer than a man's and he possesses extraordinary strength, as he will take a stick and break it by wrenching or twisting, which no man living could break in the same way."

Unfortunately before news about the capture of "Jacko" attracted the interest of Canadian and American anthropologists, the Sasquatch was sold to a traveling showman, one George K. Tilbury, who supposedly exhibited "The Wild Apeman of the Northwest Territory" profitably on a tour of England. The fate of Jacko however is unknown.

Many of the numerous Sasquatch sightings since then have been made by hunters and loggers in the wilds. Occasionally, though, one of these mysterious monsters has ventured into a small settlement. One of the best authenticated of these visitations occurred in the village of Ruby Creek, Washington, in October, 1941.

Mrs. George Chapman and her five-year-old son Jimmy were at home in their cabin on the outskirts of the village while her husband, foreman of a section gang, was working with his men on the railroad right-of-way.

Mrs. Chapman was baking a pie when she chanced to look out of a window and saw a monster "fully eight feet high" lumbering across the potato patch. Evidently attracted by the smell of baking, it approached the cabin.

With a scream of fright, Mrs. Chapman grabbed her son's hand and they fled along the railroad track to where the gang was working.

From the description they gave, George Chapman thought at first that the cabin was being invaded by a huge bear. He and several men quickly obtained rifles and

headed back along the right-of-way, joined by Deputy Sheriff Joe Dunn.

As they neared the cabin they found tracks, but the Sasquatch had already fled.

Said Dunn, "I'm convinced that the track we found within a half-mile area were not made by any bear. They measured sixteen inches in length and eight across the ball of the foot. The creature took long strides, varying between four and five feet."

Another authenticated sighting of a Sasquatch was made by Bill Roe, an Edmonton, Alberta, trapper, late in September 1955. He described his experience thus:

"My first impression was of a huge man six feet tall, almost three feet wide and probably weighing somewhere near three-hundred pounds. It was covered from head to foot with dark brown silver-tipped hair.

"It came to within twenty feet of where I was hiding, squatted down on its haunches, pulled the branches of bushes toward it with its hands, and stripped the leaves with its teeth, which were white and even. The head was higher at the back than front, the nose broad and flat, the ears shaped like a human's."

Like Kaleson, who encountered a Sasquatch twelve years later, Roe raised his rifle to his shoulder and then found he could not fire. He described his reason: "I felt now that it was human, and I knew that I would never forgive myself if I shot it."

Down through the years too many persons have seen a Sasquatch to deny dogmatically that it exists. But scientists who have succeeded in sending astronauts to the moon to probe its secrets have yet to solve the mystery of the fantastic humanoids roaming in America's own back yard.

Chapter Twenty-One

"THE NEAREST THING TO IMMORTALITY"

On a January day in 1967 Dr. James H. Bedford, a seventy-three-year-old retired professor of psychology was dying of cancer in Glendale, California.

The moment he was pronounced physically dead by his

physician, Dr. B. Renault Able, a waiting team of scientists engaged in unique and macabre activity.

The team included Dr. Alden Fox, a local physician; Robert Nelson, president of the Cryonics Society of California, Dr. Mario Satini, scientific advisor to the society, and Donald Bickerson. Consultants included Prof. Robert C. W. Ettinger, physics teacher at Michigan's Highland Park Junior High School, and attorney Curtis Henderson, president of the Cryonics Society of New York.

Herparin, a drug to prevent coagulation, was injected immediately into Bedford's veins. A mechanical heart was employed to sustain a flow of blood to his brain and protect it from oxygen-loss damage until it froze. The blood was then drained and replaced with antifreeze solutions. The body was frozen in dry ice.

The icy corpse was flown to Phoenix, Arizona, and placed in a steel "cryo-capsule," resembling a giant thermos jar. The capsule was filled with liquid nitrogen, at a temperature of minus 196 degrees centigrade. The capsule was then sealed and transported to a cryo-crypt.

If the hopes and expectations of the late Dr. Bedford and members of the Cryonics Society of California are fulfilled, some day in the future, when a cure for cancer is discovered—no matter how long a time period may elapse—Dr. Bedford's body will be removed from the capsule. He will be cured of the disease that caused his death. He will be reanimated and brought back to life with his former personality and all his twentieth century memories.

Fantastic as it sounds, Dr. Bedford believed it could be done. He was so convinced of it that several years before his death he provided $4,200 for the freezing and preservation of his body in a cryo-capsule.

Members of a growing number of Cryonics Societies throughout the country, all intensely interested in cryogenics—the science of freezing substances at extreme temperatures—also believe it can be done; and that in the years to come cryogenics will provide the best solution to man's long and incessant quest for immortality.

As they view it, in time medical science will discover cures for all diseases and also learn how to prevent "natural death," as by aging. Frozen corpses can then be reanimated, their fatal ailments cured. With progress in

plastic surgery, cosmetology and similar arts it will be possible for a human body to emerge from a cryogenic freeze in good condition.

Proponents also contend that their proposals for scientific resurrection conform to Christian teachings which emphasize the sacredness of life. Some argue further that in time the refusal of a person to be frozen after death will be tantamount to committing suicide.

The pioneer advocate of cryonics is Professor Robert Ettinger. His dedication began in 1947 when he learned that medical scientists had been successful in re-animating certain lower forms of life.

He wrote a book, "The Prospects of Immortality," in which he suggested that human beings have their bodies frozen instead of being buried or cremated after death.

At first, Ettinger's fantastic idea, like many another which is initially regarded as "far out" was derided by scientists. It was condemned by theologians. Commercial interests, such as the funeral industry, regarded it with strong suspicion.

There was a small and imaginative minority who agreed with him. One was Gerald Feinberg, eminent Columbia University professor of physics who declared that although "many think it is a hoax" the belief in cryogenic interment is gaining in the academic community.

Professor Feinberg added: "I myself am doing what I can to spread the idea among scientists."

The freezing of Dr. Bedford's body on January 12, 1967, created national interest. It also attracted several prospective patients. Some, like members of the various cryonic organizations, were encouraged by the fact that the first active steps had been taken.

Some of the would-be patients—or clients—were frankly skeptical. One woman who had made arrangements long in advance for conventional burial expressed her reason for changing to cryogenic interment in these words: "With bad luck I'll simply remain dead. With good luck, I may live again. It's worth trying."

In Phoenix, Arizona, and New York City, several cryogenic interment organizations were established. The average cost for such services is $10,000, which must be set aside to provide for preparation for interment, cap-

sule, "perpetual care" and the restoration to life at some appropriate future time. Close relatives of the deceased must sign legal documents pledging noninterference with any of these activities.

Among those to change their opinions were members of the funeral industry. Charles O. Kates, executive editor of the influential *The American Funeral Director,* conceded that "Professor Ettinger's conclusions rest on some demonstrable scientific facts; his predictions may be within the realms of possibility.

"The time may come when funeral directors will prepare bodies in liquid helium as a matter of routine and cemeterians will operate 'domantories' where 'temporary dead' human beings will remain until some long-distant moment of revival."

Although advocates of cryonics are confident that with the help of science frozen bodies may be restored to living human beings centuries hence, they acknowledge that a return from the storage vault or tomb will create strange mysteries of the future.

Professor Ettinger predicts that in time they can be solved; that there will be readjustment, relocation and rehabilitation centers for the reanimated; that the exploration of space, and perhaps the colonization of other planets may solve the problem of overcrowding a world already confronted by population explosion.

It is a fantastic and intriguing prediction. Only time will tell if it proves true.

Chapter Twenty-Two

PRESCIENT FLYER OF THE ALPS

In all the world there is no other airplane pilot quite like Hermann Geiger, renowned in Switzerland as "The Eagle of the Alps."

In countless gambles with death he has rescued 3,102 persons from the upper reaches of towering mountains, sometimes in darkness, sometimes in snowstorms.

He has recovered the bodies of 622 who met death in avalanches, falls, and by exposure to raging elements.

In the course of his numerous mercy flights, he has dropped fodder to cattle trapped in heavy snows and medical supplies to isolated alpine villages; fought forest fires; restocked rest huts and refuge shelters; delivered work crews, materials and supplies and equipment to the tops of unclimbable peaks for the construction and maintenance of weather observation and electrification relay stations.

Single-handed, Geiger has revolutionized the technique of alpine flying and rescue operations, despite early and strenuous objections by Swiss government authorities and aeronautical experts who believed his idea of using fixed-wing aircraft for these purposes to be suicidal.

In the course of a score of years he has proven the experts wrong by making 35,000 alpine landings, more than 10,000 of them on treacherous glaciers—without a major mishap in 20,000 hours of hazardous flying.

But Geiger possesses more than excellent flying ability in the conventional sense. Aviation experts, astounded by some of his seemingly impossible feats, declare he has supernormal acuteness for detecting danger combined with a remarkable prescience for *knowing* exactly where to seek those he sets out to rescue.

Among the numerous, well-documented examples of this unique combination, there was that Sunday afternoon in September when Geiger received an urgent telephone call at Sion airport where he bases his eight place, ski-fitted Pilatus Porter fixed-wing plane.

The call came from Kurt Recksher, who operates an inn in the valley below the 15,217-foot Dufourspitze near the Italian frontier, some thirty miles to the south.

"Three of my guests, Americans, are in difficulty up on the mountain, Herr Geiger. One is a woman. It is now snowing hard on the Dufourspitze."

Geiger glanced upward. It was warm and pleasant in the Sion valley. The surrounding peaks were bathed in a golden alpenglow under a cloudless blue canopy of sky.

"Can you see them through your telescope?" he asked.

"Not now. About an hour ago, before it started snowing,

I observed them resting at 12,000 feet below the Cima di Jazzi."

"Do they have a tent or camping equipment?"

"No, they didn't want to be 'bothered' carrying extra gear." Recksher heaved a gusty sigh. "You know these amateurs who consider themselves climbers. They shouldn't be allowed on a mountain without a licensed guide."

"You're right, of course," Geiger said quietly. "But I'd better start searching for your three Americans. They might freeze to death if they are left up there overnight."

Geiger's plane was on the strip waiting for him. Sunday is always the busiest time in his busy life. It is the day on which the professional guides do not work, a day in the spectacularly beautiful Valais regions of the Swiss Alps; when adventurous foreign visitors—the Italians, English, Americans, Germans and French, with the minimum of climbing experience and the maximum of confidence—set forth at dawn from their hotels and inns without guides to tackle the summits.

By noon, if not before, several of these amateurs are almost certain to find themselves in trouble somewhere on the upper slopes of the towering Breithorn, the Dom, Rinfischhorn, Lyskamm, Weisshorn or Dufourspitze, each more than 13,000 feet high.

On Sundays Geiger averages two rescue missions. Earlier in the afternoon he had located and airlifted two venturesome Italians from the Gorner Glacier after one of them had fallen into a shallow but deceptive snow-bridged crevasse and broken a leg.

Now, for the second time that day, Geiger took off from Sion Airport on a mission of mercy. Piloting his white, red-trimmed Pilatus Porter high above the valley he set a course southeastward toward Zermatt and the Italian frontier beyond.

He flew a dozen miles and then, as frequently happens without any warning, the hospitable sky was invaded by an ominous gray haze that spilled over the tops of the jagged peaks ahead. Blotting out the sunshine and whipped swiftly toward him by a strong wind, the haze closed in around him over Zermatt.

Within minutes he was flying blind. The 14,690-foot

rock pyramid that is the Matterhorn is seven miles south, a bit to the west of the city. Making altitude, he changed course to the east for added safety.

Five minutes later, approaching the sinister heights of the Monte Rosa, anchored at one end by the Breithorn to the right and the Dufourspitze to the left, he encountered driving snow. A curving death trap for aircraft astride the Swiss-Italian frontier, it is an area where more than a third of twenty-seven crashes fatal to Swiss pilots occurred during the past year.

The snow lanced toward him, gray in a sea of blackness that obliterated even his red wingtips. His hands were steady at the controls. With unerring instinct he found the Dufourspitze, sped past its snowy shoulder and banked away in a descending circle.

At 12,000 feet he made his first pass, the skis of his plane brushing the surface of the new-fallen snow. It was a delicate maneuver requiring a division of attention between keeping his plane from being wrecked and searching for the three climbers.

His first pass was unproductive. He made a second run at 12,200 feet that likewise was without result.

Circling again to make his third pass at 12,400 feet, the mysterious something in Geiger alerted him. Instead of veering off as he had intended, he flew straight ahead. Seconds later he caught a glimpse of a shadowy patch of darkness against the snow and he reacted by banking steeply and bringing his plane around. Then he leveled off, pointed the nose upward along the slope and landed on his skis.

The Pilatus Porter slid forward only a short distance after he cut the engine switch. Some thirty-five yards beyond, upward on the slope, the shadowy patch separated into three waving figures, their excited shouts muffled by the falling snow.

Bareheaded, wearing a light windbreaker, Geiger was conscious of the biting cold when he hopped down from the cabin of the plane. The temperature had dropped to almost zero.

He found all three Americans suffering from exposure. Fearful of descending in the snowstorm lest they plunge over an unseen precipice, they had huddled together for

hours, waiting for the storm to end. It was still snowing, however, when darkness came. Half-frozen, they had almost abandoned hope of being found alive.

Two of them, Arthur and Edna Vernor, a married couple in their twenties, were from Albany, N.Y. Their previous experience in mountain-climbing was limited to a summer vacation in the Adirondacks. Their friend, Lawrence Pearsoll, a Philadelphian about their own age, had made one climb before in the Bernese Oberland with a professional guide.

None of them had seen or heard the rescue plane until Geiger came towards them like an apparition. Said Pearsoll:

"When he approached us through the darkness we thought at first that our eyes were playing tricks. It was a miracle that he should be able to find us.

"He led us back to his aircraft and it was even more incredible to see that it was a fixed wing, single-engine plane. I knew that a helicopter might have a chance of landing on the steep slope of a mountain, but not an airplane in zero visibility!

"When we were aboard, Geiger maneuvered his plane so that it was pointing down the slope. He gunned the engine and we roared downward. The next four or five seconds were terrifying like plunging into the abyss of eternity. Then suddenly we were airborne and climbing."

The Pilatus Porter spiraled upward, gaining altitude. Topping the summit of the Dufourspitze, Geiger headed northward, leaving the snowstorm behind. The sky began clearing over Zermatt and the lights of the city were visible, blinking in orderly rows far below. By the time he descended for a landing at Sion the sky was studded with brilliant stars.

The ordeal on the Dufourspitze was the most frightening experience in the lives of the three amateur climbers. To Hermann Geiger, who gambled his own life to rescue them, it was a routine rescue mission.

"I come across all sorts of people who should never have been permitted to venture into the mountains on their own," says Geiger. "Most of them get into difficulties because they are either inexperienced or ill-equipped."

There are other reasons, of course. The most dreaded

is an avalanche because of its large-scale destructiveness and unpredictability.

One of the most dramatic of these slides occurred on the snow-cloaked ski slopes above St. Moritz in April 1964, while two young ski champions, Buddy Werner, "the cowboy from Colorado," and Barbi Henneberger, the personable Olympics girl from West Germany, were making a movie with Willy Bogner, Jr., another champion German skier.

They were on a downhill run when the entire slope behind them suddenly roared downward in an awesome, crumbling mass.

Willy veered sharply to the left and raced out of danger. Buddy and Barbi tried to stay ahead of the avalanche. They won the race to the bottom of the ravine—only to be enveloped by a second avalanche that crashed down from the opposite slope and buried them under tons of snow.

Geiger quickly flew to the scene. By the time he arrived, the body of Barbi had been found by spectators. She had died of suffocation. Buddy's body was not discovered until hours later. Physicians declared that his death was due to a heart attack.

During the following September an even greater tragedy occurred near the small village of Saas-Almagell, thirty miles from Sion. Here more than a thousand workmen of many nationalities—Swiss, Italian, Spanish, French and Turkish—were completing a five-year project, the Mattmark Dam, under the six-mile-long icy lip of the Allalin Glacier.

The tremendous lip suddenly broke off and slid downward with increasing speed. Workmen made a frantic dash to get out of the path of the descending avalanche. Hundreds succeeded in escaping before the work camp was buried one-hundred feet beneath a tremendous ice blanket.

The prescient Hermann Geiger was the first from the outside world to reach the scene. He appeared to have *sensed* one of the greatest disasters Switzerland has known —despite the fact that all communcation had been cut off.

Swooping down in his plane, he reported the calamity over his own radio: "There is terrible chaos below. Sur-

vivors are struggling through the tons of ice to search for those buried beneath."

Landing on the dangerous terrain, he joined in the rescue operations. Although cracks in another large section of the glacier threatened to dump more ice onto the valley floor he freed a number of survivors injured by the avalanche.

All that night he risked his life in the drenching rain, and early in the morning other rescue workers fought their way through to Saas-Almagell; both units of the Swiss Army and civilian volunteers.

Of all the thousands of rescues in which Hermann Geiger has participated this was the most ghastly. Only seven of the dead were recovered. More than ninety are still missing and will probably remain undiscovered in their frozen graves for eternity.

Geiger's humanitarian missions have earned him many medals, awards and citations. He is a recipient of the Tissandier Diploma from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale, a Carnegie Medal for lifesaving, a 50,000-lire prize from the Italian Alpine Solidarity Foundation.

His most treasured award is the St. Gregory of Honor Medal bestowed upon him by the late Pope John XXIII for rescuing more than three-hundred injured Italians in the Swiss Alps.

All of these are physical in character. But there is something else which was given to Hermann Geiger—something he cannot explain. The gift of prescience.

Chapter Twenty-Three

THE PARATROOPER WHO FELL 1000 FEET—AND LIVED

As a recruit, every paratrooper hears the same grim joke: If your chute doesn't open when you jump, bring it back and get another.

Every once in a great while a chute does fail to open and a jumper plunges to his death.

There has been at least one seemingly incredible exception, however—the experience of Pvt. Stanley A. Melczak, 503rd Airborne Infantry, 11th Airborne Division, U.S. Army.

Melczak, a nineteen-year-old paratrooper from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was in K Company, 3rd Battalion, when his outfit was flown from Sewart Air Force Base, Tennessee, to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, to participate in "Operation Snowbird," a joint Army-Air Force exercise in which twenty-eight hundred 'chutists were scheduled to jump near the small town of Talkeetna and repel a simulated invasion.

On the first day of this tactical exercise two thousand paratroopers were issued chutes, loaded aboard C-119 "Flying Boxcars" and flown to the Drop Zone where they jumped without incident.

The remaining eight-hundred, which included K Company, were slated to jump on the following morning.

Melczak and twenty-seven other paratroopers eased into bucket seats. The platoon lieutenant positioned himself near the side door, and "stick-pusher" Sgt. Edward Stewart, who would be last to jump after the "stick" of men, stationed himself toward the tail.

During most of the hour and a half flight the men conversed quietly, dozed or eyed the vast whiteness of the Arctic scenery below. They sat up in silent alertness when the lieutenant made a final check of gear and equipment. Like other paratroopers, the amount of gear that Melczak would have strapped to his body when he jumped was approximately equal to his own weight.

A red light forward began to wink. It signaled that it was four minutes to jump time.

As the C-119 roared toward the Drop Zone at 136 knots it descended to 1000 feet and leveled off.

The red light changed to green and the lieutenant jumped. A second later he was followed by a paratrooper. Another, and another.

Melczak was the next to jump. The rushing slipstream tore at his body when he catapulted into the clear, icy sky and as he began to plunge downward he righted into a vertical position facing the tail of the plane.

He was surrounded by other falling paratroopers as he

counted: "One thousand. Two thousand. Three thousand. Four thousand—"

Now the static line was supposed to jerk his main chute from his pack and arrest his plunge.

"Five thousand—"

Nothing happened and he glanced upward. The chutes of other paratroopers were mushrooming above but his own was not billowing over his head. His body was plunging downward at unchecked speed, rapidly widening his distance from the other paratroopers.

"Okay, no sweat," he remembered thinking then. "I'll use my reserve chute. That's what it is for—an emergency."

His hand reached for the D-ring which would pop the little pilot chute in his reserve pack. The wind was whistling upward past his ears with the shrill crescendo of a siren. His face felt as if it was being pushed into crushed ice.

He pulled the D-ring. The pilot chute came out. Instead of popping open, it whipped around his face, shutting out his vision.

His body was traveling at a speed of approximately 195 mph when it struck the ground like an exploding shell and geysered snow into the air.

Within seconds, officers, medics and a chaplain were hurrying toward him in Weasels and on foot. The chaplain expected to give Melczak the last rites; the medics expected to gather up his broken remains in blanket and stretcher.

None of the scores who had witnessed his horrifying thousand-foot plunge from the C-119 thought that he could have survived—but Melczak did! Moreover, though stunned when he hit the ground, he did not even lose consciousness.

"Hey! This guy is still alive!"

Melczak was aware of voices above him as his half-buried body was being dug from under the snow, and as the straps of his equipment were being cut and the cumbersome gear carefully removed.

He stared up at the unbelieving medic who untangled the pilot chute from his face and head. His mind began to clear.

At first Melczak thought that his emergency chute had opened in time to break his fall.

"Then the almost incredible truth dawned on me," he later told physicians at the 5005th Air Force hospital at Elmendorf where he was taken by helicopter.

"I had fallen the whole way—a thousand feet. Neither chute was used. Yet I was alive. This just doesn't happen. Guys get beat up far worse taking a spill from a motorcycle."

When Melczak was X-rayed and examined he was found to have sustained minor compression fractures of the backbone between the shoulder blades, some lacerations, scratches and bruises. He had no nerve injuries.

The singular circumstances of his case attracted attention in Air Force circles and he had a number of military visitors, including high-ranking officers, physicians and neurologists.

He was transferred to Valley Forge Army Hospital in Pennsylvania where, under the watchful eye of Captain R. D. Campbell, Jr., and other medical officers, he spent two months receiving physical therapy in the Orthopedic Service in the Department of Surgery.

After his recovery Melczak was given a long furlough and then transferred to the 2128th Army Service Unit at Fort Knox.

His case was investigated by a board of officers of the 503rd Airborne Regiment, which also took testimony of eyewitnesses.

The board ascribed his survival to two facts plus a stroke of almost miraculous luck:

When he struck the ground Melczak landed in a pile of snow, forty-one inches in depth, cushioning the impact. His position on landing was slightly doubled, knees and hips flexed. His legs and body acted as a sort of shock absorber.

As for the factor of luck, the investigating officers reported:

"On the day before the accident several tracked vehicles participitating in "Operation Snowbird" had been engaged in extensive snow clearing throughout the area. In most instances the snow had been deposited in solid banks. It so happened that Melczak landed on a small, triangular

patch of snow which had not been packed down. Had he hit the ground a few feet away in any direction, he probably would have been instantly killed by the tremendous impact."

Considering all the circumstances, the board estimated, unofficially, that the odds against Melczak's survival when he jumped from the C-119 were several million to one.

Chapter Twenty-Four

THE REINCARNATION OF MARGOT LYONS

Through the years, many persons have laid claims to reincarnation. Some have been exposed as publicity-seeking frauds. Some, sincere in the belief that they have lived before in other human bodies, have been found to be victims of their delusions.

There is also a third group—a small, mystifying minority. It presents a challenge to the most astute scientific and psychic investigators who acknowledge that they are baffled by the questions: Have these individuals actually lived before? Have they pierced the veil of eternity and are revealing a previous existence?

Diane Loreaux, born in Nevers, France, in 1949, the only child of a moderately well-to-do raiser of Charollais beef cattle is an outstanding example.

An attractive, talented young artist who studied art in Paris, her case is unique in that she herself did not claim to be the reincarnation of a ninteenth century French girl, Margot Lyons. This was discovered by others, among them the eminent Paris psychiatrist, Dr. Henri Michelet.

As a very young girl Diane objected to the name by which she was christened and asked her parents to call her Margot.

"Why, mon petite?" her father asked. "Your mother and I think that Diane is a very pretty name."

"But it is not really my name," the youngster said. "I am Margot."

Her parents were indulgent. They told her they'd call her Margot at home as a pet name, but she also insisted upon using it in school and among her friends.

Her teachers praised the imaginativeness of her compositions. Even in the lower grades she wrote about exotic scenes in the South Pacific with a wealth of accurate detail. One teacher, Lucien Sullat, impressed by her descriptions, asked her if she had ever lived in the South Pacific.

"Yes," she answered. "I went there when I was a very little girl. I remember it was a long journey in a ship with three masts and big white sails."

"A sailing vessel?" Sullat was puzzled. "Surely you are mistaken."

"No," Diane said firmly. "It was a sailing ship."

A few days later Sullat chanced to meet her father, Charles Loreaux.

"Your daughter writes most vividly of your life in the South Pacific," he commented. "It must have been most interesting. Where in the South Pacific did you live?"

Loreaux stared at him. "We have always lived here in France. My daughter has never traveled more than twenty kilometers from Nevers."

Diane's drawings were also imaginative; lush tropical plants and flowers and thick jungles. On one occasion, however, when asked to include people, she drew a crude but graphic picture of cannibals roasting the nude bodies of decapitated white men in a huge pit.

Her teacher shuddered at the grisly drawing and said she was being much too imaginative.

"No," she said. "I saw them do it. They killed five men by chopping off their heads. Then they cooked them over a fire and ate them."

"Indeed! And where were you while this was taking place?"

Diane pointed to a mass of bushes she had drawn in the background.

"I was hiding behind that foliage. They discovered me, and at first they were going to kill me. But there was also a white man among the cannibals. He was one of the six they had captured and they had spared his life because he joined with them in eating the other five. He pleaded with the chief, who agreed to let me live."

Her teacher called it a most fantastic story. Diane maintained that it was true and that there was more to it.

"What more could possibly have happened?" he asked.

Diane seemed puzzled. She did not remember, she said. A few days later, however, she drew a picture of a little girl and a white man in a jungle clearing, gazing at a round object on the ground. She showed it to her teacher.

"I remember now," she said. "The cannibals let us go and this man took me back to where I had lived. There was no one there. Nothing but this big grindstone. It was too heavy, I think, for anyone to carry off."

"I think you'd better forget the whole thing," her teacher advised.

But although Diane tried, she could not forget. In addition to drawing similar scenes, she dreamed vividly about them.

Following graduation she went to Paris to study art. She rented a room and enrolled at the Sorbonne to study landscape painting under Professor Paul Audel. She used the name "Margot Lyons" for no reason she could explain.

Her paintings, like her earlier drawings, continued to be exotic and tropical in locale until one day Professor Audel suggested that she try something else—a seascape.

Diane—from now on we'll call her Margot—painted a three-masted ship under full sail.

"Good," Audel nodded approvingly. "But what an odd name for a sailing vessel, *Chandernagor*."

"It is a real name," Margot said. "I made a long journey on the ship when I was a little girl."

This aroused the curiosity of Audel, who has an investigative mind. He inquired at the French Maritime Bureau, which has long maintained an official registry of ships.

Yes, he was informed, there had been a three-masted, nine-hundred-ton sailing ship, the *Chandernagor,* registered in the mid-nineteenth century. It was purchased by the Marquis de Rays with funds obtained from six hundred credulous Frenchman, Italians and Belgians who paid the equivalent of eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars to participate in establishing a colony on the island of New Ireland in the Bismarck Archipelago.

Audel was intrigued and made further inquiries. He

learned that the *Chandernagor* had sailed for the South Pacific with the colonists in 1878 and landed them—men, women and children, with their household goods and some farm equipment—on New Ireland in 1879. Many of them had died of malaria or starvation while trying to establish the colony they called Port Breton at the south end of the island. When they abandoned the attempt and made their way towards the northern part of the island, some of the survivors were slain and eaten by cannibals. Approximately a score was rescued by missionaries. One of these was a four-year-old girl named Margot Lyons!

Excited by this discovery, Audel went to his friend, psychiatrist Henri Michelet, and related what he had learned.

"Can it be," he asked, "that my student, Margot Lyons, is the reincarnation of the Margot Lyons who was rescued by missionaries on New Ireland in March of 1880 and who died of malaria in Rabaul, New Guinea, in 1882 at the age of six?"

Dr. Michelet expressed skepticism, but Audel persisted: "My student Margot Lyons is not a sensation-seeker. She does not claim to have lived before. In fact, she has never mentioned reincarnation to me. She believes that the scenes she describes and paints with such detailed accuracy were observed by her early in her present life."

Dr. Michelet suggested that Audel bring her to his office for an interview. At first she objected.

"My friends will think I'm mentally deranged if they find out," she said. "Perhaps I'll believe so too."

Audel assured her that the interview would be conducted in secrecy. He took her to the psychiatrist's office then and many times thereafter.

Dr. Michelet did not hypnotize her. He asked no leading questions nor did he put any suggestions in her mind. He simply let her talk and draw. With her cooperation he also obtained a number of the drawings she had made at an earlier age.

Everything she told the two investigators during these sessions checked with documented facts.

Following the failure of his attempt to establish a colony the Marquis de Rays had been arrested. In 1883 he was tried by a French court on a charge of misappropriating

the settlers' money and fined three thousand francs. He was also sentenced to four years imprisonment.

Audel secured a transcript of the testimony of the marquis and survivors which had been taken during the trial. Margot neither knew of the transcript nor had she ever heard of de Rays.

What she told the two investigators was borne out by the transcript.

When she was shown the crude drawing of the cannibals and a white man roasting the headless bodies of five colonists, the picture she had drawn for Lucien Sullat, she repeated the story she had told the teacher several years before.

Dr. Michelet asked her if she remembered the name of the white man who had saved her.

"He was an Italian," Margot answered. "I did not remember his name when I drew the picture for M. Sullat. It has come to me since, Angelo Paladino."

"Can you explain why you can now recall his name?"

"No. It's just that I now seem to remember more about names, faces and places than I did when I was younger."

This is a verbatim excerpt of the testimony of Angelo Paladino made during the de Rays trial:

"After the sugar crop failed and we abandoned the settlement at the southern tip of the island, several of the colonists made their way northward through the jungle, hoping to find more favorable conditions.

"I was with a party of five other men; two of them Belgians, three Italians like myself.

"We were attacked by savages. The other five were slain and their heads removed. For some reason the chief decided to spare me the same fate. He ordered me to join in feasting upon the bodies of my comrades. I was forced to do so and my horror was great. . . .

"One of the cannibals heard small sounds in the bushes. He dragged out a small weeping girl named Margot and prepared to smash her head in with a club. I think she had been abandoned by another party of survivors that had fled before us. I felt very sorry for her and begged the chief to let her live."

With each session, Dr. Michelet, like Audel, became

more and more convinced that Margot Lyons had lived before.

"I have investigated many supposed cases of reincarnation," he declared. "That of Margot Lyons is the only one which has passed every test we have been able to devise. Time and time again she has told us facts of occurrences both in France and on the island of New Ireland in the period between the years 1876-1882 which we verified from other sources to which she had no access."

The most convincing proof to Dr. Michelet was yet to come, however.

As a young girl in Nevers, France, Margot, who had never been more than twenty kilometers from her home, made a drawing for her teacher in which she showed herself, and her rescuer, Angelo Paladino, gazing at a big grindstone lying in a cleared jungle. At the time she had explained to her teacher what the heavy object was and that it was the only thing they found.

Some sixteen years later, on August 15, 1964, in Rabaul, New Guinea, thousands of miles away, a Reuters news correspondent sent a dispatch which appeared in *The New York Times*.

"A grindstone has been set up by the side of the Commonwealth Bank, facing Rabaul's main street, Mango Avenue," it began.

"It is the sole surviving relic of one of the great frauds of the nineteenth century. . . ."

Chapter Twenty-Five

THE LEFT HAND OF GOD

Behind closely guarded doors of a biological laboratory in a remote region of the Ural Mountains several top Soviet scientists, members of the USSR's Institute of Experimental Biology engaged in probing the mystery of human birth, have succeeded in creating bionauts—creatures in human form "born" outside of the female womb.

They have kept three hundred bionaut fetuses alive for periods as long as six months before destroying them—fearful of starting a race of robot-like monsters; immune to many human diseases, long-lived, with tremendous strength and virility. Creatures which might turn against their creators and wipe all human beings off the face of the earth.

The pioneer in these fantastic experiments was no fictional-type mad scientist but a reputable Italian physician, Dr. Daniele Angelo Petrucci, a wealthy forty-three-year-old humanitarian with a private medical research laboratory in Bologna.

Appalled at the incidence of stillbirths and miscarriages among Italian women, Dr. Petrucci began his research a decade ago.

"My aim is to help women have babies, for I have been upset by the great number giving birth to stillborn children especially at their first pregnancies," he declared.

"My research is directed along humanitarian lines, guided by the Christian principles I have practiced since childhood. I love mankind. If a wife should lose a baby on which the hopes of herself and her husband have been centering, this is a human tragedy."

Dr. Patrucci obtained the ovum of a female patient who was being treated for cancer. He placed it in a glass jar containing amniotic fluid from a second pregnant woman and fertilized it with the sperm of a healthy male. The conception was completely successful. He scientifically created a living, growing embryo outside of a human womb.

He reported the procedure of his experiment to a medical publication, adding that his intent had been to grow a gland which he could transplant from a glass jar to the body of a woman patient:

"I thought the chances of a glandular transplant's surviving would be improved if I obtained a gland from an embryo that was first cultivated outside of a human body in plasma and then irrigated with plasma belonging to the new host.

"For these reasons researches were started at the stage of fecundation in vitro and cultivation of the zygotes until

the organs in which I was interested could be extracted from the test tube."

The publication of Dr. Petrucci's medical article precipitated an immediate storm of censure and criticism. One of the most scathing denouncements was published in a Bologna newspaper. It was written by a reporter who depicted the medical scientist as a sinister egomaniac, trying to imitate God. The story grew in fantasy and sensationalism when it was reprinted throughout Italy and spread to other countries.

At first Dr. Petrucci ignored this sweeping condemnation. He eluded curious and thrill-seeking visitors in the seclusion of his locked laboratory where he watched the bionaut fetus grow from shapelessness into the embyonic appearance of an infant with the rudiments of legs.

One day, then, the influential newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano,* which voices the views of the Vatican, drew renewed attention to Dr. Petrucci in a stern editorial:

"God surrounded the act of creation of a human being with the most supreme assistance of love, nature and conscience. It would be most monstrous to violate these conditions."

Dr. Petrucci already was under a great strain and this was the final straw. On the twenty-ninth day of his experiment he killed the fetus. He consoled himself with the thought that when the storm of protest subsided he would repeat the experiment, the next time in the utmost secrecy.

Time passed, and as he had promised himself, he repeated the experiment. He felt that he owed it to medical science.

He created a second bionaut. He watched it develop as the embryo of a female infant with eyes, ears, limbs, reproductive and other organs of a human body. He recorded the beating of its heart.

The bionaut lived for fifty-nine days. Its death was caused by what he discovered to have been a deficiency in a special nutritional plasma, a fatal deficiency which he learned to correct.

In the meantime the Soviet government had been keeping Dr. Petrucci under discreet surveillance. It decided that the time was now opportune to invite him to visit Moscow.

Dr. Petrucci accepted the invitation. He was an honored guest at the Academy of Sciences and at the Institute of Experimental Biology, where he was presented with a medal in recognition of his achievement in creating two bionauts. The Institute director, Dr. Ivan Nikolaivitch Maiscki introduced him to the eminent Soviet biologist, Dr. Pyotr Anokchine, who had been experimenting along the same line.

The two medical scientists had admired each other's research work in the past and, upon meeting, quickly became friends. Dr. Maiscki made a suggestion to Dr. Petrucci:

"Remain with us and collaborate with Dr. Anokchine in the secluded laboratory in the Urals. You will be free from interference or criticism. I am certain that as a team we will be most successful. Your discoveries of the mysteries still surrounding human birth will benefit all humanity, free it from inherited mental and physical deficiencies, perhaps enable future generations to live for five hundred years or more."

It was a glowing picture that was presented to Dr. Petrucci, badgered and harassed in his own country. He saw it as an opportunity to work unhindered in one of the world's most modernly equipped biological laboratories, free from pressure, from religious or other condemnation.

Dr. Petrucci had not confirmed political beliefs. His scientific interests transcended national boundaries and ideologies. His roots, however, were firmly planted in Italy and in Bologna where he had a wife and two young children. He decided to remain in Russia and work with Dr. Anokchine for a period of two months.

During those two months Petrucci and Anokchine created some three hundred bionauts. But when Petrucci emerged from the seclusion of the laboratory and returned to Italy, he encountered a renewed storm of protest and condemnation. This time it was not spearheaded by religious leaders in Rome but by scientists in several countries who had either discovered or surmised his activities while in Russia.

A leading British medical journal raised the question as to whether the creation of bionauts in the secrecy of a

Soviet laboratory was for the benefit of mankind or for the future destruction of Soviet enemies:

"With two-hundred-sixty-five-million people, three-hundred-sixty-six per square mile, the USSR cannot be regarded as underpopulated. With a birth rate of twenty-two percent annually, the prolongation of human life to a span of five hundred years would, as Dr. Ivan N. Maiscki is well aware, create tremendous problems for a country which at times finds itself hard put to feed its present population.

"Unfortunately we are compelled to view the Soviet bionaut project with suspicion; with the ominous thought that Soviet scientists are endeavoring to create in bionauts a race of sub-human beings without emotions, compassion or fear.

"A race of bionauts has ominous implications. It poses the threat of a future legion of sub-humans useful and expendable to the USSR in an age of nuclear weapons and space vehicles."

Perhaps it was because of this criticism that Dr. Petrucci developed doubts about continuing to create bionauts. Perhaps he finally yielded to other pressures.

Whatever the reasons, his doubts and feelings were communicated to Dr. Anokchine, who agreed to permit the embryonic bionauts to die by withholding the special nutritional plasma from their food.

But far from ending experiments in the creation of a form of human-like life, the demise of the bionauts was only the beginning.

In a guest lecture at Rockefeller University, New York City, Dr. Harry Harris, internationally known medical authority of the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology at Oxford University startled his audience by announcing that he had succeeded in crossing human cells with cells of mice, rats, rabbits, frogs and chickens. Some of the resulting hybrids propagated normally by cell division for months.

This conjures up visions of creatures of nightmarish aspect and behavior; Rat Men, Human Frogs, Chicken People, Rabbit Beings, Mouse Giants.

Dr. Harris promptly denied that he was trying to

create a race of monsters. This denial was coupled with implication equally as startling.

His experiments and that of other medical research scientists have led them "to the threshold of understanding gene regulation and cellular differentiation," which some day may give vital clues whereby scientists can direct the course of human development.

Chapter Twenty-Six

MYSTERY OF THE NUCLEAR SPACESHIP

"The peasants saw a body shining very brightly with a bluish-white light in the northwest quite high above the horizon. The body was in the form of a pipe; that is, cylindrical.

"When this strange object approached the ground, it seemed to become pulverized. A huge cloud of black smoke was formed and a loud crash heard. And at the same time a forked tongue of flame broke through the cloud."

So reads an account in the Russian newspaper *"Irkutsk Sibir"* dated July 2, 1908, of what some Soviet scientists now believe was the explosion of a nuclear spaceship visitor from somewhere in outer space.

No one is more convinced of this than the forty-seven-year-old Soviet astronomer, Dr. Felix Zigel, assistant professor at the Moscow Aviation Institute, who has spent many years investigating the cause of the tremendous explosion in the sky in the vicinity of Vanavara, Siberia.

The flight of the unknown object which ended in a disintegrating blast was observed by many people. Some one-hundred-five of them, among those alive today, have given Dr. Zigel and other scientists eyewitness reports.

When the object exploded at 7:17 a.m. on June 30, 1908, it devastated a wooded area of twelve hundred square miles, killed an unknown number of human beings and hundreds of reindeer, no remains of which were ever

discovered. The resulting shock wave, officially recorded at the time, traveled twice completely around the globe.

At first it was believed that a meteorite had collided with the earth, but despite an intensive search investigators were unable to find either a crater or any meteorite fragments.

Later, when questioning eyewitnesses, they learned that the object had not plunged downward and struck the ground. Unlike a meteorite, it had exploded in the sky after a *horizontal* flight observed for a distance of several hundred miles.

Its flight path over a section of central Siberia, as reconstructed by Dr. Zigel from sightings, began about one hundred-seventy-five miles east of Irkutsk, where it presumably entered the earth's atmosphere; followed a straight line five hundred miles northward to Kezhma; turned east to Preobrahenka, a distance of two hundred miles; then doubled back to the west as if lost. It then traveled on for approximately two hundred additional miles before it exploded.

Following the explosion, many inhabitants and domestic animals of the area developed mystifying burns; and physicians in the region, who knew nothing about radiation burns or radiation sickness, were confronted with a strange disease. It was particularly prevalent among those living in the Tunguska River basin where the blast had occurred.

Many of the victims declared that the explosion had been like "a fiery whirlwind" and they had felt "a great heat."

"It is known that meteorites and other celestial bodies fall without any changes in their flight direction," Dr. Zigel pointed out.

"But the Tunguska object, flying at speeds estimated up to thirty thousand mph, definitely performed a maneuver, drastically changing its flight pattern . . .

"The theory that the flying object seen before the explosion was not of natural origin but was of artificial nature has been confirmed by scientiflc investigation."

Dr. Zigel believes that the explosion of the mysterious object generated energy equivalent to a ten-megaton nuclear bomb.

"As the explosion occurred, a mass of heated air flew

upwards into the stratosphere, while cold air rushed in from all sides to take its place," he explained.

"There developed a fiery whirlwind blowing toward the center, the kind of whirlwind still vivid in the minds of those who experienced the atom-bomb tragedy of Hiroshima, Japan, in World War II. . . .

"Astronomers so far are unaware of any natural bodies which, on entering the earth's atmosphere, explode in the air like nuclear bombs.

"And scientists, comparing the effects of the 1908 Siberian explosions with nuclear explosions, came to the conclusion that in their basic patterns they were identical."

He and several of his colleagues who investigated the area point to physical evidence that a nuclear explosion did take place.

"It is well known that the release of energy from a nuclear explosion creates abnormalities in living cells of any kind that exist in the vicinity," he declared.

"In the region of the Tunguska catastrophe, an expedition of Soviet scientists found that trees, and all vegetation in general grew exceptionally fast after the blast of 1908.

"The luxuriant growth of vegetation was produced by special causes which cannot be explained away by common forestry knowledge of plant and tree growth."

This leaves a number of very intriguing questions unanswered. Was the object, described by eyewitnesses as huge and cylindrical in shape, actually a visitor from outer space?

Was it nuclear-powered? If so, it would indicate that the inhabitants of wherever it came from possessed a knowledge of nuclear energy and space travel much more advanced that that of earth scientists.

This knowledge, however, was not infallible, as evidenced by the fact that the occupants of the spaceship, if it was one, apparently made an error in navigation when they turned eastward from Kezhma—and that their journey ended in disaster on retracing this part of the flight.

But who were these unknown visitors from outer space and what was their mission?

Dr. Zigel and many of his colleagues believe that who-

ever they were they were not unfriendly and that they were trying to reach the Russian capital, then called St. Petersburg, when they met with disaster.

"If there had been a slight delay and if the space vehicle had continued on its last course, headed west, the explosion could have taken place directly above St. Petersburg," Dr. Zigel concludes.

"The resulting loss of life and property damage would have been catastrophic."

Chapter Twenty-Seven

THE MOST MYSTERIOUS PLACE ON EARTH

Although the airplane and the helicopter have made it possible for man to reach many once inaccessible regions of the globe, there are a number which are still marked "unexplored" on the map and which present an intriguing and hazardous challenge.

Among the most mysterious is the Kalahari Desert in the harsh and forbidding wastelands of Southwest Africa, one of the world's largest regions of continuous sand where the nomadic Bushmen, a small hardy people of unknown origin live today as they did in the Stone Age.

Another, the deep-shadowed, inpenetrable jungles of New Guinea, where several explorers have disappeared, among them Michael Rockefeller, twenty-three-year-old son of the New York State governor, are inhabited by primitive tribes, some of which still practice cannibalism, and several of which have never seen a white man.

Another is the ominously named "Empty Quarter," the dread Rub'al Khali, southeast of Saudi Arabia. Only three white men have ever succeeded in crossing it. The first was Bertram Thomas in 1931. The second was H. St. John Philby in 1932. The third was Wilfred Thesiger, who made the hazardous journey twice, in 1946 and in 1948.

All three explorers encountered many dangers, among them hostile nomadic tribesmen, heat, thirst, almost impassable mountains. Large areas of terrain proved to be

potential deathtraps. One of the most treacherous is a belt of quicksand which has a surface appearance of the firmer sand surrounding it. Believed to extend for about four hundred miles, it is not even indicated on existing maps.

The Empty Quarter, according to many legends, was once the domain of Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, who brought "ivory, apes and peacocks" as well as golden treasure to her royal lover, King Solomon. Geographers and archeologists have long speculated whether Ophir, from whose mines the Queen of Sheba obtained the gold, is not located in the Rub'al Khali—but the centuries-old secret is still unsolved.

Another is the Desert of Judah, stretching from Jericho southward to the searing heat of the Dead Sea Rift Valley, thirteen hundred feet below sea level. It is a vast, mysterious treasure house dating back to Biblical times.

It was in this area, in 1947, that a shepherd, Muhammad Adh-Dhib, found the priceless parchments which scholars have called to be the Dead Sea Scrolls.

A few years later the Tushingham-Kenyon joint British-American expedition while digging into the ruins of Biblical Jericho uncovered seven skulls of Neolithic men who lived at least thirty-five centuries *before* Josha conquered Jericho.

According to the eminent archeologist-explorer Professor Kurt Landreich: "The potentials of further spectacular discoveries in the Desert of Judah and its environs are infinite."

Another great challenge is in the heart of the Gobi Desert, which extends approximately one thousand miles from east to west and six hundred miles from north to south.

Within this region, shunned alike by the fiercely independent nomad tribes of Mongols, Kirghiz, Chantos, Tartars and Tungan, is an area which many tribesmen believe is the gateway to an earthly Hell. The only known book which describes it was written by Wong Ma-sho, a Chinese geographer, based on accounts obtained from Chantos horse herders.

"For one thousand li the Valley of Demons is formed of salt, but of salt in a hard and solid state. Here there

are red mists which rise and clouds which float but rarely do the stars and sun appear. Little is found of living animals but there are many Demons in human form but with monstrous teeth and claws which can tear a man apart with ease.

"Should the traveler escape entrapment by the Demons, death awaits at the end of the valley where terrible fan-shaped blizzard clouds descend from the mountains with violence unknown elsewhere."

Mysterious as all these areas are, there is one which offers an even greater challenge—the long-sought city of Zerzura in the Libyan desert.

Zerzura, lost to the outside world for almost five centuries, lies somewhere in the high plateau of the little-explored Gilf Kebir, a region approximately the size of Switzerland, approached from every direction by precipitous escarpments.

In the year 1481 a camel caravan, following the ancient trade route through the Libyan Desert between the Nile and the eastern escarpment, encountered a fearsome shamal, or sand storm.

Most shamals blow themselves out in two or three days, but this one lasted for a phenomenal eight, and when the fury of the terrible winds and the great clouds of sand subsided all of the animals were dead and only one human being survived, a camel driver named Hamid Keila. Everyone, and everything else had disappeared beneath several feet of sand.

Several months later Hamid Keila showed up in Benghazi where he told an incredible story.

Lost in the desert where the shamal had obliterated every landmark, he had climbed the escarpment with his last remaining strength, hoping to find water.

He searched in vain and he was half-crazed, almost dying of thirst, when he was found by a party of tall, blue-eyed warriors who were "fair of hair and bore swords straight of blade, not curved in the manner of scimitars."

According to Hamid Keila, he was well-treated by these strangers. They took him to their city which was called Zerzura. His description, preserved on parchment in the archives of the Libyan government, is as follows:

"Approaching the white citadel which they call El Suri

you will see palms, vines and springs. Penetrate into the wadi between two mountains. From this last wadi starts a road which will lead you to the city, which is surrounded by a high wall. This city is white like a dove and on its gate is carved a bird the like of which I have never seen.

"Within are many dwellings, some of which contain great riches. There is no lack of water. There are many oases with pools of water surrounded by luxuriant grasses and many-colored flowers. Women, lithe as houris and light of skin, play with the children and wash garments in the pools."

When the Emir, Mahmoud, heard about Hamid Keila, he summoned the camel driver and questioned him closely.

The camel driver seemed to be both frightened and evasive. Supplementing his original story, he said that although the inhabitants of Zerzura spoke Arabic they also used many words of a language he could not understand. He did not believe they were Moslems for he saw no mosque within the city and there was no muzzein to call them to prayer at sundown. Nor did the women wear veils but boldly showed their faces as did the desert harlots of the Ouled Näil.

Hamid Keila added that when he regained his strength he decided to escape. On a dark night he fled from the city, climbed down the northern escarpment, and after enduring many hardships, he made his way to Benghazi.

"If these people treated you kindly why was it necessary for you to escape?" the Emir asked shrewdly. "You were not held captive."

The camel driver remained silent. Now he appeared to be even more frightened. The Emir ordered guards to search him.

Concealed in the folds of his abba they found a ruby set in a ring of gold. The stone was large and flawless, a gem worth a fortune.

"How came you by this?" the Emir asked accusingly and the trembling camel driver did not answer.

"These strange infidels took you to their city and restored you to health," the Emir said angrily. "In return for their kindliness you stole a gem of great value and then fled."

The Emir ordered that Hamid Keila be taken to the desert where both of his hands were chopped off in punishment for thievery and the camel driver was left to bleed to death.

The ruby ring did, however, substantiate Hamid Keila's story about the mysterious city. During his rule, Emir Mahmoud sent several expeditions into the Libyan Desert to search for Zerzura on the vast plateau of the Gilf Kebir. No trace of it was ever found.

The ring was added to the collection of royal jewels stored in the palace in Benghazi, where it has remained.

In June, 1949, the collection became the property of Emir Mohammed Idris El Senussi who, in December, 1951, was crowned King Idris I of Libya.

Since then, the Zerzura Ruby has been examined by several jewel experts and archeologists. They all have agreed that the gem is priceless and that the ring in which it is set is of European craftsmanship dated back to about the eleventh or twelfth century.

This was during the era of the Crusades, which took place during the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. Historians point out that in the course of the Crusades a number of European expeditions vanished, either on the long and arduous journey to the Holy Land or when returning from it. Very possibly, they say, one of these expeditions may have wandered deep into the Libyan Desert, become hopelessly lost in the trackless Gilf Kebir and settled there.

Although the plateau appears arid, abundant water has been found only a few feet beneath the sandy surface in some of the explored areas. The "blue-eyed and fair-haired" men, the strange-sounding words mixed with their Arabic, and their straight-bladed swords, all mentioned by Hamid Keila and studied by ethnologists in the documentary record of his story, add to this intriguing theory.

Hidden somewhere on the plateau of the Gilf Kebir today may be the most mysterious place on earth—Zerzura, "city of great riches"—inhabited by descendants of Crusaders who vanished centuries ago.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

THE FACE OF DOOM

The first time the face of the stranger appeared in the dreams of Janice Metz, twenty-four-year-old Philadelphia schoolteacher was on a mid-June night in 1968, two weeks before she was to fly to Europe with another teacher, Laura Shepherd, twenty-five, for a summer vacation.

It was an eerie face that puzzled and disturbed her; a man of indeterminate age with dark piercing eyes. His nose was long and bony, his lips thin and bloodless. On his head was a cap which was vaguely military in shape with an odd insignia, the letters "H.F." circled in narrow braid.

Night after night the face kept reoccurring in her dreams and she finally told her friend Laura about it.

"I don't know anyone who looks like that," she added. "Nor anyone with the initials "H.F." He seems to be wearing some sort of foreign uniform."

"What happens in the dream?" Laura asked curiously.

"Nothing. That's one of the strange things about it. Sometimes he just stares at me. Sometimes he acts as though he wishes to speak to me but iron bars suddenly separate us and he quickly disappears."

Laura advised her to try to dismiss the bizarre dream from her mind. Certainly it was nothing to worry about.

"I guess you're right," Janice agreed.

Janice did try. On going to bed she thought pleasantly of their nearing vacation, of the cities they would visit and the things that they would do. Nevertheless she continued dreaming and seeing the face of the stranger.

Two days before the start of their vacation she decided to consult a psychiatrist. He asked her a number of questions, among them if she had ever flown before.

"Only once, on my last year's vacation to California," she answered. "I didn't look forward to the flight but it was the quickest, least expensive way to get to the Coast."

The psychiatrist was reassuring. He told Janice that her repeated dreams were caused by her subconscious anxiety about flying and that she associated the unknown

pilot with the face of the strange man. She was still puzzled, however.

"We are flying BOAC," she said, "but I always plainly see the initials 'H.F.' on this stranger's cap."

The psychiatrist told her that this had no significance. He gave her a mild sedative and instructed her to take it a half-hour before she boarded the plane.

On June 30 she and Laura flew to England. Their flight was smooth and uneventful. They spent ten enjoyable days in and around London and during this period Janice's sleep was not disturbed by dreams of the stranger.

In London they met several friends from back home, among them Mary Childress, Janice's roommate of college days, who was going on to France a week before them.

"Be sure to look me up when you arrive in Paris," she urged. "I'll be stopping at the Hotel Fauborg. It's in the 2nd Arrondissement near the Bourse-Opera."

On the night Janice and Laura arrived in Paris, where they checked into a small hotel on the Left Bank, Janice again saw the face of the stranger in her dreams.

She told Laura about it at breakfast the next morning. "I thought I'd never have that dream again," she said, "but now it seems more detailed than before."

"In what way?"

"Well, for one thing, there are no longer simply iron bars separating us. The bars are connected with wire mesh. It's sort of like a cage. Then, too, there were several people in the cage with the stranger. I recognized only one of them. You."

Laura laughed. "Probably a prison cell. I'll have to be careful not to get into any trouble while we're here."

On the next night Janice had the same dream again, even in greater detail. Just before waking up she remembered that she had cried out to Laura to escape from the cage before it was too late.

"Too late for what?"

"I don't know. When I woke up I had the feeling that something terrible was about to happen."

Later in the morning they phoned Mary Childress at the Hotel Fauborg. She was delighted to hear from them and she suggested that they meet her at about two in the afternoon in her room, No. 612.

They arrived at the hotel shortly after two and Laura went into the lobby first while Janice paid the taxi driver.

By the time Janice entered the lobby Laura was in the elevator followed by several other persons.

As Janice approached the old fashioned elevator there seemed something vaguely familiar—and disquieting—about it. Then she caught sight of the elevator operator who was about to close the cage-like door.

He gazed at her with piercing eyes. His nose was long and bony, his lips thin and bloodless. His face was that of the stranger who had haunted her dreams so often. The cap on his head bore the initials "H.F."—for Hotel Fauborg.

"Laura!" Janice screamed. "Come back before it is too late!"

As the door clanged shut she had a feeling that something terrible was about to happen.

The elevator creaked upward, crowded to capacity. Although two passengers were let off at the third floor and another at the fourth, as the police pointed out later, the ancient cables had already been weakened by the severe strain.

The elevator was nearing the fifth floor when the cables snapped abruptly and it plunged downward. At 2:25 p.m. on July 13, 1968, all eight passengers crashed to their death at the bottom of the pit. Among them was Janice's friend, Laura Shepherd.

The ninth victim was Paul Routier, 47, the elevator operator.

Janice Metz never saw him in her dreams again. Nor has any psychic investigator been able to explain the supernormal phenomena of his repeated warnings.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

THE LIVING DEAD

When is a person who medically has been pronounced deceased actually dead?

One of the most terrifying of all human fears is that

of being buried alive. Despite a medical examination it not only can but does happen—and more often than is realized.

According to an estimate by a professor on the staff of Tulane University's medical school, one person is buried alive every twenty-four hours in all civilized countries.

Pathologist John Larue of Toronto, who has disinterred several hundred corpses throughout Ontario following requests to perform post mortems, reported: "In more than five percent of these cases, particularly in rural areas, when the lid of the casket was raised the cadaver was found lying in an unnatural position, either on its side or, more often, with hands above head in a tragic effort to get out.

"It was apparent in many of these cases that the person was buried prior to death, that he subsequently revived and was then suffocated when the air remaining in the coffin was exhausted."

On March 6, 1966, *The New York Times* reported one ghastly incident which, in my own opinion at least, deserved a Pulitzer prize for the most macabre and frightening news story of the year.

Under the three-column head of " 'Dead' Woman, 71, Fights for her Life," the article written by Timesman Irving Spiegel began:

"The physician who signed the death certificate of a seventy-one-year-old woman later discovered alive in a funeral home said yesterday that at the time he could 'find no life in her.'

"Dr. Samuel Gaines, the physician, said that he had been asked on Friday by members of the family to go to the home of Miss Henrietta Landau, a retired nurse, on the Lower East Side.

"Dr. Gaines explained that he had not been Miss Landau's personal physician, but was a friend of the family. He said she had suffered from Parkinson's disease. It was also learned that she had a coronary condition."

The story went on to say that the physician was in Miss Landau's apartment from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., at which time he signed the death certificate. A cardiologist who had also been summoned to the apartment observed that her heart had stopped.

The Burial Permit Section of the New York City Health

Department gave the permission necessary to remove the body to the Park West Memorial Chapel. Wrapped in a sheet, Miss Landau was wheeled into the funeral home at approximately 8:45.

It was shortly after this when two attendants, Robert Hanley and John O'Holloran, heard moans. They traced the sounds to the receiving room. And to Miss Landau.

"She's alive!" they both began shouting.

The police were notified and an emergency crew sped to the funeral home. The "body" of Miss Landau was taken to Roosevelt Hospital where it was found that she was alive and in a critical condition. The Health Department was then notified to cancel the newly issued permit.

How could such a horrifying mistake have happened? Said Medical Examiner Helpern:

"Our office does not issue death certificates for deaths resulting from natural causes. These are signed by a private or family physician. Our office acts only in deaths from unnatural causes and from unusual circumstances.

"In the case of Miss Landau no heart sounds were heard, no reflexes could be obtained and there was no motion of the body.

"A person can go into a state of deep syncope—unconsciousness—and the condition of the patient can simulate death very closely."

In another well-documented case, that of Arnold Sykes, thirty-seven, owner of a bakery in Derbyshire, England, the victim remained "dead" for approximately fourteen hours.

Shortly after 6 p.m. on March 20, 1968, Sykes returned to his home. He let himself in and removed his coat. He was about to hang it up when, without the slightest forewarning, he blacked out and fell to the floor.

His wife, Elizabeth, heard the crash and rushed to him. Unable to revive him, she summoned the family physician, Dr. Melvin Hardley.

There was no sign of life in Arnold Sykes. He had apparently succumbed to a heart attack.

Dr. Hardley signed a death certificate and later that evening the body was removed to a funeral home, where it remained overnight.

On the following morning, the mortician, Philip Stoner,

wheeled the body into the preparation room, preliminary to embalming. Stoner was a careful, thorough man. At mortician's conventions he had heard of a number of cases of "pseudo death," although he had never personally encountered one.

After making an examination of the body in which he found no evidence of heartbeat, pulse or respiration, Stoner went to an adjacent supply room to obtain embalming fluid. He estimated that he was gone from the preparation room for about seven or eight minutes.

When he returned he received a profound shock. Not only was the body stirring, but Sykes was moaning and his eyes were blinking. He had "returned" to life, fully fourteen hours after he was pronounced dead.

After he was rushed to the Derbyshire Hospital and placed in the Intensive Care unit, Sykes responded very well to treatment for a cardiac condition. Within three days he was able to sit up in bed. A week later he was sent home to convalesce. He apparently has been in good health ever since.

The case of Arnold Sykes attracted considerable attention in England. Medical authorities who examined him were convinced that it was neither an acute heart attack nor epilepsy that had precipitated a deathlike coma. Their verdict was "deep syncope—cause unknown."

Many mystics and psychics believed that Sykes had actually been dead for a period of fourteen hours. There were also reincarnationists who insisted that he not only been dead but had been "reborn" within his own body.

Medical scientists were unanimous in denying this possibility. Said Dr. Carruthers Medford, British neurologist, "It is a well established medical fact that when the blood supply to the brain is stopped even for a short time, severe and irrevocable brain damage occurs. The brain of Arnold Sykes functions normally."

No matter how the case of Sykes is viewed, one fact remains dramatically obvious. He was within scant minutes of being embalmed by the mortician when he emerged from a deathlike coma.

The most grisly of all such incidents happened in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1966 when Mrs. Anna Moore, forty-two, was certified to have died of a coronary attack,

put in a casket and placed in a niche of the Moore family vault in a nearby town.

Three days later Arthur Goodale, ten, and Kent Williams, eleven, were playing in a grassy area beyond the cemetery fence when they heard faint, eerie cries.

Both of them were frightened and ran away, but on the following morning before going to school Arthur told his mother, Mrs. Ada Goodale, that there was a "ghost" in the cemetery.

"There are no ghosts," said Mrs. Goodale.

"But I heard one screaming," Arthur insisted. "So did Kent."

Mrs. Goodale thought about it after her son left for school, felt vaguely disturbed, and in midmorning called Kent's mother.

"I was about to call you," said Mrs. Williams. "When Kent came home he was very frightened. He said that the cemetery is haunted and that both he and Arthur heard a ghost screaming."

Mrs. Williams does not believe in ghosts either. She decided to telephone to the sexton, however, and tell him that perhaps an injured person, or animal, was somewhere in the cemetery.

The sexton investigated. He heard faint cries coming from the Moore vault and when he let himself in he discovered that they originated in the casket of Anna Moore, lying in a still-open wall niche.

When the lid of the casket was removed Mrs. Moore was found alive. The terror and agony she had experienced on reviving from her coma can only be surmised. The satin lining had been clawed to shreds in the upper part of the casket, wherever her hands had been able to reach. There were scratches in the wooden lid, nail gouges in her own face. In trying to escape she had worn down her fingernails to bloody tips.

Her heart was beating and she was breathing feebly but the team of physicians that worked on her were unable to revive her. She died less than half an hour after arriving in the hospital.

In an interview with Dr. Larue, I asked the pathologist about the Moore case and others of its kind.

"Such instances of premature burial unfortunately do

occur," he said. "Epilepsy, catalepsy and certain other afflictions resulting in complete loss of consciousness and suspension of voluntary movement can cause a trancelike condition closely resembling death. There are medical histories of such cases in which the victim has remained in a state of deep syncope for days—or weeks.

"Definition of death as 'the absence of life' as commonly determined by cessation of breathing, neither heartbeat nor pulse, is no longer absolute, particularly when viewed in the light of the development of scientific apparatus, heart massage and surgical techniques.

"I know of only one positive identification of death—putrefaction. In civilized countries, however, a body is removed to a mortuary, is buried or cremated before putrefaction sets in."

How many among them might be "living dead"?

The pathologist shook his head. "More than we'll ever know."

Chapter Thirty

DO HUMANOIDS OR NONHUMANOIDS LIVE ON OTHER PLANETS?

Somewhere in the universe must exist beings endowed with intelligent processes at least as good as ours.

Dr. George Kistiakowsky,
Harvard University scientist.

As astronomers, physicists and astrobiologists continue to learn more and more about the universe, their belief that there are intelligent beings living on some of the other planets is growing.

According to renowned Polish astronomer Dr. Jan Gadomiski: ". . . highly developed civilizations on planets of the suns in our galaxy should be the rule rather than the exception."

In the United States many eminent scientists like Harv-

ard's Dr. Kistiakowsky share this belief. One of them is Dr. Harrison Brown of the California Institute of Technology who has declared: " . . . I would place a bet . . . that life (including intelligence) is probably a very abundant commodity in our universe."

Scientists are much less certain, however, about the physical structure of extraterrestrial beings. Are they humanoids—human-like in appearance—or nonhumanoids? Do they bear any semblance to the "little green men" who, on several occasions in the past have been "seen" landing from UFOs? Or are they more like the BEMs, the grotesque Bug-Eyed Monsters, popularized for several years by science-fiction writers?

No one has sought the answer with greater dedication than Russian astro biologist Dr. Leonidovich Krylov of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

"We Earth People make the egotistical error of assuming that extraterrestrial beings should be fashioned in our physical image," he says. "Were we to be visited by a regard us as horrible monsters."

Dr. Krylov, likeone of hi scolleagues, Dr. Rodolfo Margaria of the University of Milan, maintains that even if the extraterrestrial visitor came from a hypothetical world which was exactly as old as ours and which exactly duplicated our environment from creation, his evolutionary pattern would be vastly different from ours because "the probability of exact earthling duplication is so small as to be impossible to compute."

Dr. Krylov, like one of his colleagues, Dr. Rodolfo Marrich Engels in the nineteenth century that once a life unit—a single-cell microorganism—is created by chance on any livable world, it must start a chain of evolution which cannot be halted by its environment but, in succeeding generations, will adapt itself more and more to the environment by physical changes within itself.

As a pertinent example here on earth he points out that several Indian tribes in the Peruvian Andes live in the rarified air at an altitude of fifteen thousand feet or higher, where a lowlander would experience difficulty in breathing.

Furthermore, Dr. Krylov contends, because of the tremendous differences in environment, an extraterrestrial

visitor from one planet would have little if any resemblance to a visitor from another.

"Estimates of the surface temperature of Venus based on its distance from the sun range from one hundred and twenty-five to two hundred degrees Fahrenheit," he says, "but using the technique of radio reflections, Dr. Carl Sagan at the Institute for Basic Research at the University of California, and other astrophysicists believe the temperature may range as high as six hundred degrees Fahrenheit.

"This high temperature, however, does not eliminate the possibility that there may be some form of intelligent humanoid or nonhumanoid life on Venus. It might be that these creatures might have evolved from a life-unit of a silicon-like or other heat-resistant microorganism unknown to us on earth.

"On the other hand, although the temperature on the surface of Jupiter is as low as minus two hundred and forty degrees Fahrenheit, and that on Saturn even colder—minus two hundred and ninety degrees—here too it is possible that some form of intelligent life may exist. Instead of having skin like ours, the bodies of these humanoids or nonhumanoids might be covered with a thick fur-like substance. Instead of having saline plasmo blood, theirs may be ammoniated. Instead of breathing oxygen they may breathe nitrogen. This ammoniated "blood" and nitrogen-breathing exchange cycle is quite as capable of maintaining a supply of muscular energy as our own blood-oxygen cycle."

Other scientists who agree with Dr. Krylov point out that it well may be that we earthlings are the real evolutionary freaks in the universe and somewhere in the course of billions of years in the evolvement of man nature went wrong in giving us two arms, two legs, an upright spine and sagging organs.

According to Dr. William Howells, professor of anthropology at Harvard, intelligent beings on other planets may be better "bio-engineered" by evolution and they may be "bimanous quadrupedal hexapods."

Being bimanous, he explains, means that they would have two hands, not apelike, similar to ours, but with long, slender fingers, compared to which ours are clumsy.

Quadrupedal, he explains, means using four feet for locomotion.

When a human being walks upright he advances by putting one foot in front of the other to prevent himself from falling forward. Four-legged animals, with much less intelligence than ours, possess both greater stability and better means of locomotion.

An extraterrestrial being who is a hexapod, Dr. Howells explains, means that he has six limbs; two arms and four legs. Thus, in general physical appearance, he may somewhat resemble a centaur, the half-man-half-horse of Greek mythology.

Since, therefore, his internal organs would be located below a horizontal spine instead of sagging in an upright body, as they do in a human being, they would have a better physiological arrangement with less congestion. Thus this extraterrestrial being would have fewer kinds of ailments and live longer. His blood would be pumped to the brain more efficiently and his intelligence potential be greater than that of an earthling.

"It is not to be expected that thinking beings on any other planet are at our particular stage of intellectual development," Dr. Krylov points out. "On one planet they may not have evolved past an era comparable to that of the Stone Age on earth. On another they may have advanced hundreds, perhaps thousands of centuries beyond us.

"When one considers that we human beings inhabit but a small planet revolving around a minor sun in one of countless galaxies, it is reasonable to assume that there are many forms of humanoids and nonhumanoids living on some of the millions upon millions of other planets."

But do any of them resemble human beings?

This, Dr. Krylov and his colleagues acknowledge, may remain an intriguing mystery which they will never solve.

Chapter Thirty-One

SPONTANEOUS HEROES

There are many known reasons why in certain circumstances one person will gamble his life to help another in deadly danger.

In the excitement of combat, a pilot, G.I., or sailor may brave incredible odds in his efforts to rescue others. A policeman, fireman, lifeguard, or other dedicated public servant may take risks far beyond the call of duty. Love and devotion can transform a timid mother into a heroine when her child is in peril.

Psychologists can readily explain the motivation for many such kinds of heroism. Neither they nor anyone else, however, can satisfactorily explain the spontaneous act of risking one's life to save that of a total stranger—an impulse contrary to every human being's basic instinct for self-preservation.

Consider, for example, the case of twenty-four-year-old Lyle W. Slusher, a truck driver, who was driving with his wife along the highway near South Newbury, Ohio, on a May morning, when a two-door compact station wagon approached their car from the opposite direction.

At the wheel of the station wagon was Richard H. Wortman, father of three young girls—four-year-old Terri Jean, and six-year-old twins, Linda and Lynn—who were riding with him. In the rear compartment was a power lawn mower with a full gasoline tank.

Suddenly the station wagon veered sharply to the right. Before Wortman could regain control, it shot over the highway shoulder, rolled over the steep bank and pinned the lower part of his body beneath the door frame. The three screaming youngsters were trapped in the back seat.

Gasoline spilled from the tank of the mower. Catching fire, the flames leaped upward, threatening to burn the four occupants to death.

Slusher slammed on his brakes. Jumping from his car he dashed down the bank and grabbed the handle of the door where the twins were trapped. The door was buckled by the impact and he yanked desperately until it

yielded. Lifting the twins out he hurried them to his anxious wife.

"Here! Take care of them. There are two more!"

Slusher raced back to the station wagon. Dense smoke billowed around him. He opened the rear door, calling out to little Terri Jean.

"This way! Come over here to me."

"I can't!" The terrified child cried. "I want my daddy!"

Flames licked Slusher's face, half blinding him when he crawled toward her. They were crackling closer and closer to the mower tank, now threatening to explode.

Reaching Terri Jean, he found her unable to move. Her foot was caught under the rear of the right seat. While he was freeing it, he heard Wortman coughing, suffocating with the heavy smoke.

"I want my daddy —"

"I'll come back for him," Slusher promised Terri Jean, and carried her to his wife.

Again he approached the station wagon, which was now enveloped by flames. He burned his hands when he seized Wortman by smouldering trousers. The man couldn't be moved.

"I'm caught tight," he moaned. "I'm going to burn to death."

Releasing his legs, Slusher turned around and braced his back against the door frame. He pushed and strained, succeeded in lifting the station wagon a scant few inches —enough for him to pull Wortman free.

Slusher was tearing the victim's flaming clothes from his body when the tank of the power mower exploded, showering them with blazing debris.

It was necessary to hospitalize both men for the treatment of severe burns. Both recovered from their injuries. Wortman and his three daughters are alive today because of Slusher's spur-of-the-moment heroism.

Consider, too, the case of Charles H. Crawford, fifty-two-year-old construction foreman of Atlanta, Georgia.

On a sweltering day in August, Henry F. Strozier, thirty-one; David Maxwell, thirty-three; and two other laborers, were smoothing freshly poured concrete for a ceiling above the lobby area of a building under con-

struction when the supports gave way and a fifteen-foot section fell to the floor, twenty-one feet below.

All four men plunged downward with the debris and were buried in a ten-foot-high mass of tangled steel, timber and concrete.

Crawford, the foreman, who was supervising another part of the job, dashed to the scene, followed by several of his own workers. He uncovered Strozier, who was injured but able to walk.

He then found Maxwell, lifted the wreckage from his body and helped carry him to safety.

"I think some other guys are still buried under that pile," Maxwell gasped.

"How many?"

"I dunno. Jones and Ferguson were on the scaffold with us. There could have been other guys below when the ceiling gave way."

Crawford hurried back to make another search. On his way, to his relief, he met both Jones and Ferguson, who had managed to dig themselves out.

"Anyone else still in there?" he asked.

Like Maxwell, neither of them was certain.

"I've got to find out. I can't leave them to die."

They tried to stop him. They warned him that the remaining supports could not withstand the strain of forty tons of concrete still in the ceiling. But Crawford was determined.

He went back to the debris and started to search again. Some of the men of his own gang joined him.

A minute later there was an explosive sound above their heads, like a cannon had been fired. The others took alarm and fled. The foreman continued digging. Suddenly the entire forty-ton section of concrete plummeted downward and crushed him to death.

Carlos Rojo, thirty-six, most certainly had no thought of becoming a spontaneous hero while teaching his class in the Groves, Texas, high school on a December morning shortly before the Christmas holidays.

He heard a commotion in the hall, followed by a loud blast. Then two more. Outside of his door was a fifteen-year-old wild-eyed student with a twelve-gauge shotgun. The youngster had triggered a shot at a teacher who had

scolded him, another at the principal, a third at a teacher coming out of the office. All three shots had missed and both the principal and the second teacher had quickly retreated to the office.

By the time Rojo reached the hall the youngster had reloaded his shotgun and started toward the principal's office. There was no mistaking his lethal intentions.

Rojo dashed to the office door and blocked the entrance with his body.

"Give me that gun!" he ordered and held out his hand.

"Get out of my way or you'll get it too!" the youngster said in a hysterical voice.

Rojo did not move when the student came on with the shotgun pointed at his stomach.

With the muzzle less than four feet from his body Rojo lunged forward and to the side, trying to grab the barrel.

The shot gun went off with a roar. Buckshot grazed the teacher's stomach and left hand. His right arm was almost torn off.

The youngster screamed, dropped the gun, and ran from the building. He was soon seized by other teachers.

Rojo was sped to a hospital, where surgeons succeeded in saving his arm, although he probably will never have full use of it again. It was the price he paid for his impulsive heroism and saving at least two lives.

For just one more instance, reminiscent of an old-time movie thriller:

Donald L. Taggart, thirty-four-year-old factory employee, was walking to work as usual one spring morning near Dowagiac, Michigan, when he saw a car stalled on the railroad tracks that crossed the road ahead.

The driver, a thirty-seven-year-old housewife, Mrs. Manila Bounds, was grinding frantically on the starter. She apparently did not hear the warning whistle of an express train approaching at eighty-miles-per-hour. When she finally did become aware of it, the train was within twenty-five hundred feet of her and she froze in terror.

Taggart acted swiftly. He dashed out upon the tracks, opened the left hand door of the car, pulled Mrs. Bounds out and pushed her off the right-of-way. Seconds after he jumped clear, the engine struck the car, demolishing it.

The wreckage was carried for two thousand feet before the engineer succeeded in stopping his train.

The four spontaneous heroes of these dramatic incidents—a truck driver, a construction foreman, a teacher and a factory employee—were average citizens. Like millions of others, they had left their homes without any thought to what emergency might suddenly confront them nor how they would react. Neither Slusher, Rojo, or Taggart, who survived, could give any logical reason for risking their lives to save others.

Any one of us unexpectedly may face a situation tomorrow—or this very day, within the hour. Thousands of these perilous moments of truth occur daily—in the sky and on the highway, at work and at play, even in the comparative safety of home or school room.

Statistics show that should it happen to you, in all probability you will quickly respond, ignore your own danger, and perhaps perform an act of bravery of which you did not think yourself capable.

Should you later wonder why, you will seek in vain for an answer. There is no explanation for this phenomenom which surmounts the instinct for survival.

Chapter Thirty-Two

DISAPPEARING MONSTERS OF THE DEEP

On a summer night in 1966 when adventurious Captain John Ridgway and Sergeant Chay Blyth were rowing across the Atlantic in their tiny boat, the *English Rose III*, Ridgway rested on his oars and gazed at the calm sea in the bright moonlight.

"I looked out into the water," he said after the voyage, "and suddenly saw the writhing, twisting shape of a great creature. It was outlined by the phosphorescence in the sea. I was frozen with terror.

"I am not an imaginative man, and I searched for some rational explanation. Chay and I had seen whales, sharks, dolphins, flying fish, all sorts of creatures, but this

monster in the night was none of these. I reluctantly had to believe that there was only one thing it could have been—a sea serpent."

Huge sea serpents and other terrifying creatures of the deep have been glimpsed for many centuries in various parts of the world. First mentioned in the Old Testament, they became so accepted as fact that early mariners, even in Columbus' time, feared attack by ferocious sea monsters larger than the biggest ships.

Do such monsters live today deep in unexplored regions of the seven seas? Scientists are by no means sure. Although many of the early tales unquestionably stemmed from the vivid imagination of seafarers who feared the unknown hazards of the sea, between the year 1640 and the mid-Atlantic sighting made by Ridgway and Blyth in 1966, there were five hundred and ninety reports of the appearances of huge sea creatures in different regions of the globe.

One of the most detailed descriptions was given by the Scandinavian missionary, Hans Egede, who founded a colony in Greenland. Wrote Egede:

"The most dreadful Monster showed itself upon the surface of the water in the year 1734.

"This Monster was so huge in size, that coming out of the water, its head reached as high as the masthead; its body was bulky as the ship and three or four times as long. It had a long pointed snout, and spouted like a whale fish; great broad paws, and the body seemed to be covered with shell work, its skin very rugged and uneven.

"The under part of its body was shaped like an enormous huge serpent and when it dived again under water, it plunged backward into the sea, and so raised its tail aloft, which seemed a whole ship's length distant from the bulkiest part of the body."

Between 1779 and 1800, scores of Maine seamen observed a giant sea serpent which reappeared at irregular intervals in the waters near Penobscot Bay.

In 1817 another monster creature of the deep surfaced in the ocean off Gloucester, Massachusetts, it was observed by so many people, so many times—14 in all, during the course of the summer—that it was given the name of Cape Ann Monster. Several fishermen and

whalermen were courageous enough to hunt for it, but the only one who actually came to close quarters was a whaler, one Mathew Gaffney, who testified in a sworn deposition to the Linnaean Society of New England:

"On the 14th day of August, A.D. 1817, between the hours of four and five o'clock in the afternoon I saw a strange marine animal resembling a serpent in the harbor of Gloucester. I was in a boat and was within thirty feet of him.

"His head appeared full as large as a four-gallon keg, his body as large as a barrel, and his length that I saw I should judge, forty feet at the least.

"I fired at him when he was the nearest to me. I had a good gun and took good aim. I aimed at his head and I think I must have hit him."

Following Gaffney's encounter, both the New England whalers and the State of Massachusetts offered a reward for the head of the Cape Ann Monster "or any other strange monster of the deep comparable in size."

There were no claimants, although during the following year the Cape Ann Monster, or a sea creature closely resembling it, was seen eight times in the waters of Long Island Sound.

Many years were to pass before there was a report of a more successful encounter with another such awesome monster of the deep.

On the morning of January 13, 1852, the *Monongahela,* sixty two days out of her home port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, was beating through the Pacific off the coast of Panama when the lookout called to the skipper, Captain Amos Seabury, that a creature of great size was writhing in the water about half a mile off the port bow.

After confirming this sighting with the aid of a telescope, Seabury had three longboats put over the side. They headed toward the monster with the skipper in the bow of the lead boat, armed with a harpoon. Behind the longboats there sailed both the *Monongahela* and another whaling ship, the *Rebecca Sims,* Captain Samuel master.

Seabury did not lack courage. He ordered the longboats to close in on the monster which, on approaching, he estimated to be at least twice as big as the largest whale he had ever seen.

With a mighty thrust he drove the harpoon deep into the neck of the creature, whose writhing immediately increased in violence. There was a great butting of head, opening and closing of jaws, undulations of body and threshing of tail. The longboats retreated quickly, but the two accompanying Seabury were not quick enough. The monster's lashing blows hit one, then the other, with the force of a battering ram. The boats overturned.

As Seabury and his oarsmen rescued crew members who had been spilled into the sea, the monster dove, the harpoon in its neck attached to the line.

The heavy line sped out of the tub and gradually slowed up until it reached the end of the thousand-foot coil. Seabury then had himself rowed to the *Rebecca Sims,* which was closer than his own ship. The rope end was put aboard and secured to the capstan.

"We began to take up the line on the capstan," Gavitt noted in his log. "After hauling in about half the length the line went slack. A few minutes later the dead body of the monster floated to the surface.

"It was even longer than at first it had seemed, one hundred and fifty feet if not more. The body was about fifty feet around. The neck, pierced by the harpoon was ten feet in thickness, supporting a head ten feet long in which there were great jaws with ninety four teeth, each uniformly three inches in length.

"The teeth hooked backward like those of a land reptile. The body of the monster was brownish gray with a lighter stripe, three feet in width, and I saw neither fins nor legs. The monster, from what I had observed, did not swim, but had writhed its body through the water in the manner of a reptile."

Seabury and Gavitt conferred and decided to render the monster as if it was a colossal whale. Flensing spades and pots were brought out, but it soon became evident that the body was tough-skinned, hard-fleshed and without blubber.

Seabury had the head of the monster removed and preserved in the vast pickling vat. As he had planned to sail into the Arctic before returning to his home port, he requested Gavitt to make a full report of the episode.

Gavitt did make the report when the *Rebecca Sims*

reached New Bedford. He added that Seabury would have the sea monster's head with him when he returned from the Arctic. But neither Seabury, his crew, nor the head of the sea monster were ever seen again and the *Monongahela* vanished from the sea. More than a decade later a party of Eskimos hunting in the Aleutians found the name board of the whaler on the shore of Umnak Island.

In the years that followed, many other sea monsters were sighted in the Pacific. At least three were observed by a number of persons on shore; one off Cape San Martin, another near Monterey Bay and the third, "The San Clemente Monster" of the 1920s in waters between San Clemente and Santa Catalina.

It was the third which was seen most closely by fishermen who agreed that The San Clemente Monster had a great columnar neck and reptilian head at least ten feet above the water, huge eyes—about a foot in diameter —and a body of coarse dark hair topped with "a kind of mane of hair that was also coarse and dark, hanging dankly."

In July, 1960, following a series of violent storms and gales which swept the Tasmanian coast, a somewhat similarly described sea monster was found dead upon the shore by a sheep rancher, Ben Fenton, and two of his drovers. They notified the government that the cadaver of a "huge and unidentifiable sea creature with a furry body" had washed ashore about two miles above the mouth of the Interview River.

This so interested the Australian Parliament that a team of scientists was sent to examine the cadaver. According to the zoological report:

The creature is of an unidentifiable species, measuring twenty feet in diameter, with a thickness of six feet at center. Hide or skin consists of a fibrous white substance covered with bristly brown hair. It is an inch in thickness and incredibly tough. Even sharp axes have difficulty in penetrating it. The creature definitely is not any species of whale or shark.

Among the many scientists throughout the world interested in solving the timeless mystery of sea monsters is the eminent Belgian zoologist, Dr. Bernard Heuvelman.

After devoting eight years to gathering all known reports of sightings and studying every available scrap of data about the elusive creatures of the deep, he fed his accumulation of information into a computer. On the basis of its findings he concluded that there not only are sea monsters but seven distinct species throughout the world; that they vary in size between thirty and one hundred fifteen feet in length; and that some can propel themselves through the water at speeds of up to thirty-five knots in pursuit of their swiftest fish prey. This is the way he classifies the species:

The *Long-Necked Monster* is distinguished by a hump on its back; has two horns on its head; almost no tail; and can swim at a speed greater than thirteen knots.

The *Merhorse,* far from being a fearsome legend, really exists. It has huge eyes, a long floating mane and is whiskered. Its neck is of medium length.

The *Many-Humped Sea Creature* is characterized by a series of dorsal humps. Its neck is medium in size and white-striped. Eyes are small but prominent.

The *Super-Eel* possesses a long cylindrical body; is a fish, not a mammal; and has the ability to leap out of water.

The *Marine Saurian,* probably the most frightening in appearance with a head somewhat like a huge crocodile, is considered a reptile. It has been identified only four times in the hundreds of sightings.

The *Many-Finned Monster* is a denizen of tropical and subtropical seas. It has a comparatively short neck with several triangular fins resembling a huge crest. The head is round and it has mottled coloration.

The *Super-Otter,* believed to have been a mammal, may now be extinct, for none has been sighted since the year 1848. It is—or was—gray or beige in color, with a long tapering tail and two pairs of webbed feet. Its favorite habitat appeared to be the chill waters off the coasts of Greenland and Norway.

Some scientists, although agreeing with Dr. Heuvelman, point out that the computer findings still await actual confirmation.

"The huge eyes of the Merhorse tends to indicate that

it lives at a great ocean depth where there is little light," declares Japanese ichthyologist Dr. Arthur Wakamoto.

"The crocodilian appearance of the rarely sighted Marine Saurian suggests the possibility that not all prehistoric monsters are extinct; that somewhere beyond the Continental Shelf in the unexplored deeps and trenches of the ocean floor there may be Lost Worlds inhabited by such enormous creatures since the dawn of time."

Chapter Thirty-Three

THE LAUGHING DEATH THAT BAFFLES SCIENCE

In the summer of 1968 two medical research scientists —an American, Dr. Francis Rockwell, and a Hollander, Dr. Augustus Lippold—made a hazardous journey far into the interior of New Guniea, to the headwaters of the Yuat River to investigate the world's strangest disease, kuru, which apparently afflicts only the Stone Age natives of the Mogei tribe in the "Lost World" highlands between the Central and Bismarck Range.

Kuru, in the native dialect means "to tremble like leaves in the wind." It was first observed in 1932 by a Dutch gold seeker, Cyprian Dorfman, who discovered the existence of the isolated Mogei village. On his return to the coast he informed government officials in Marienberg that he had witnessed two of the Mogeis laugh themselves to death for no discernible reason.

Dorfmann's story received little credence at the time. It was all but forgotten for more than a score of years until another white man, Dr. Andrew Grey, physician in charge of the government hospital in Okapa, chanced to visit the village. He, too, reported having seen a Mogei laugh himself to death. Dr. Grey speculated that kuru might be a rare, prehistoric disease passed down by countless generations of Mogeis.

Several more years went by before Dr. Rockwell and Dr. Lippold, who specialize in the research of communicable tropical diseases, came upon Dr. Grey's report. They read it with interest and concern. It was true that the Mogeis had been isolated for thousands of years. But the world was shrinking rapidly. If kuru was contagious, the day might not be far off when it would be swiftly spread and become a global epidemic.

So it was that the two medical research scientists traveled up the Sepik River, into the twisting Yuat tributary, climbed a formidable mountain range and made their way to the Mogei village where Laplap, the udata, or hereditary chief, permitted them to remain.

On the eve of the full moon, a few days after their arrival, Laplap invited them to witness one of the tribal ceremonies, the mating ritual of the goro-goro.

At sundown all adult Mogeis were summoned to the village clearing by the eerie wailing of bamboo "ghost" flutes which were played inside the spirit house.

Two drummers emerged from the spirit house, took up position on either side of the entrance and beat out a slow rhythm on hollow logs.

The Mogeis squatted on the ground, forming a large hollow square with the feast fire in the center. Married couples occupied the far end. Unmarried females sat on one side, facing warriors on the other. Laplap and his two white guests sat on log stumps at the near end of the square, their backs to the spirit house.

Laplap gave a signal and the Mogeis began to feast on steamed pork and ears of roasted corn. They ate with much smacking of lips, belching and patting of bellies, expressing enjoyment.

At another cue from Laplap the drummers began to pound more loudly upon the logs and the rhythm quickened. Married couples got to their feet and shuffled around the smouldering fire in a slow, primitive dance, the women circling in one direction, the men, in an outer ring, circling in the other.

The drumming stopped when Laplap raised his hand. It was a sign for the couples to retire to their huts. The women took with them pieces of pig entrails and remaining bits of pork for their children.

After the couples departed the drummers began the pounding rhythm again, now faster than before, and the

unmarried females danced. Rockwell and Lippold watched them circle the fire in wild abandon, their bodies writhing and twisting.

As the women approached the side where the warriors squatted, their movements became more and more sexual, with much cupping of breasts, suggestive out-thrusting of bellies and gyrating of torsos. With orgiastic movements they pantomimed the act of mating, goading the warriors and arousing their lust until they began leaping to their feet in a frenzy of excitement and carried their temptresses off into the darkness beyond the square.

One of the girls suddenly stopped her provocative movements. Her sweat-glistening body trembled from head to foot and she began to laugh—shrilly and uncontrollably.

Darting forward, she grabbed a club lying on the ground beside a warrior and swung it wildly above her head. Laughing hysterically, she brought it down with all her strength.

The club smashed the warrior's skull as though it were a melon. It spattered his brains, blood and bits of bone upon the shocked spectators. The girl shrieked with laughter. Standing astride her victim, she swung the club down again, smashing what was left of his head.

Warriors jumped to their feet and tried to seize the gory club but she fought them off, flailing the weapon with superhuman strength and screaming with demoniac laughter as they dodged away from the blows.

"Kuru!" Laplap called out, and started toward her with his eight-foot stabbing spear.

The berserk girl turned at his approach and, as she swung her club, she tumbled over the body of the warrior sprawled between her feet.

Before she could recover her balance Laplap thrust his spear through her heart. She crumpled with the point protruding from her back and she was still making faint, ghastly sounds of laughter as she died.

Rockwell and Lippold were thoroughly shaken by the incident. In the days that followed they observed three more cases of laughing death although not under such dramatic circumstances. Nor, they discovered, did the village witch doctor, an old Mogei named Temblo, at-

tempt to cure kuru sufferers although he treated other ailments with various herbs, roots and barks.

There was no cure for kuru, Temblo gravely told the white men. Not even his most potent incantations and a popona charm worn around the neck to drive spirit demons from the body of the afflicted ever worked.

"As soon as the first trembling symptoms of the laughing death were identified by the witch doctor he pronounced the victim to be a nunk, in the dialect of the Mogeis, One of the Living Dead," the medical researchers later explained.

"A female victim was permitted to remain with her family, a male with fellow warriors in the Bachelor House until succumbing to the disease.

"Death came slowly, usually occurring between six months and a year after the first symptoms appeared. In the earlier stages victims were seized by fits of trembling and uncontrollable laughter, often followed by normal periods. Only toward the end did they become lethargic, lose all interest in food and literally starve themselves to a laughing death."

Rockwell and Lippold also noted a marked difference in behavior between male and female kuru victims. The men appear resigned to their fate, accepting it with calm fatalism. The women, especially the younger ones develop a form of nymphomania and engage in orgiastic relations with all men they desire, whether single or mated.

"Adultery is common among the Mogeis," Dr. Rockwell explains. "Excessive promiscuity among female victims of kuru is commonly accepted even by wives whose husbands have such ardent and devitalizing relations that their ability to fulfill marital relations is greatly reduced.

"Quite frequently, as in the instance of the female whose violent death we witnessed at the goro-goro ceremony, female kuru become sadists as well as nymphomaniacs. They appear to develop a sudden, intense hatred for all males and indulge in lethal acts against males they desire most or with those which have already given them sexual pleasure."

Although male Mogeis are formidable warriors in native warfare, it is more because of the terrifying fear of kuru that other tribes never molest their village. Even the ag-

gressive Uraris, who have attacked villages throughout the Yuat highlands, keep a frightened distance from the Mogeis.

"It is not natural for anyone to die with laughter in his throat," they say.

And baffled medical research scientists agree.

Chapter Thirty-Four

"DAUGHTER OF CASSANDRA"

On the afternoon of January 3, 1967, Donald Campbell, 45, world's fastest speedboat driver, was at Lake Coniston, England, making a final inspection of his jet-powered Bluebird in which he hoped to better the water speed record of 276.33 miles per hour he had set in 1964.

About 4 p.m. the telephone in the boathouse rang and it was answered by one of Campbell's friends, Jock Euston.

The caller, a woman who identified herself as a Miss Gwen Hadley, living in Portland Rise, London, N.W., asked to speak to Mr. Campbell. Euston told her that the racing driver was very busy and added that unless the message was urgent he would either relay it or have Campbell return her call later.

"What I have to tell Mr. Campbell is of the utmost importance to him," said Miss Hadley in a perturbed voice. She hesitated for a moment. "Please tell him that he must not drive his speedboat tomorrow. If he does he will kill himself."

"Just a sec." Euston was startled. "Why do you say this?"

"I cannot tell you. I cannot give you any definite explanation. I only *know* it will happen if he drives his Bluebird tomorrow. Please be certain to tell him."

Gwen Hadley hung up before he could ask another question and he deliberated over her warning. It was apparent that she did not know the racing driver personally.

It was also apparent that she had phoned because she was genuinely disturbed.

Probably some sort of a mystic crackpot, Euston concluded; London is full of them these days. There was no sense in giving Campbell the warning and possibly upsetting him. After all, the Bluebird was under constant guard and every inch of the craft had been carefully tested and inspected by the racing driver and his expert mechanics.

That evening Campbell was restless. "The night before a run is always the longest," he commented to Euston. "The waiting always makes me edgy. I wish it was morning."

"How about playing some cards," Euston suggested. "Gin rummy?"

"I think I'd prefer solitaire, Jock. More relaxing."

Campbell sent for a deck of cards. He methodically laid out the rows of down cards then drew his first up card from the remainder of the deck. The ace of spades.

He frowned and turned up another card, the king of spades.

He displayed them both to Euston. "Rather sinister, eh?"

"Don't tell me you're that superstitious!" Euston managed to summon a reassuring grin. He also decided not to mention Gwen Hadley's telephone call. Two such warnings might be unnerving to Campbell, who was hoping to raise his speed record to three hundred miles per hour.

Early the next morning after warming up the Bluebird, Campbell made the first of two required runs on Lake Coniston. During that first speed trial the jet-powered craft performed superbly, touching two hundred and ninety-seven miles per hour, just three miles per hour short of his goal.

"I think I'll better three hundred on the next run," Campbell remarked just before he started off.

Skimming over the roiled surface of the lake, the Bluebird accelerated rapidly. Speed climbed to two hundred and eight-five miles per hour and went on to two hundred and ninety-five. It was almost touching three hundred miles per hour when Campbell suddenly spoke into the

microphone of his radio transmitter to the official clockers on shore.

"I'm on my back. She's going! She's . . ."

The Bluebird leaped into the air. Spectators watched in horror as she cartwheeled, geysered a great white column of spray on hitting the water and plunged to the bottom, taking Campbell with her.

Jock Euston was one of the eyewitnesses interviewed by London newspapermen after the tragedy. He declared that Campbell had seemed restless during the previous evening, and even more so after turning up the two spade cards.

He mentioned the strange telephone call he had received from Gwen Hadley.

"Just an odd coincidence," Euston added. "But I decided not to tell Don lest it increase his nervousness."

A newspaperman, Arthur Whitehead, looked up Gwen Hadley in her flat in Portland Rise. From his interview with Euston he rather expected to find an oddball female claiming to possess clairvoyant powers.

Miss Hadley, age 27, was an attractive brunette, employed as a teller by a London bank. She disavowed any interest in psychic phenomena. She explained that on the day before the speed trials she had read about Campbell and his Bluebird in the newspaper. After finishing the newspaper she had gone into the kitchen to make herself a cup of tea when she suddenly had a "feeling of dread" and the thought of Campbell came into her mind.

"I knew something terrible was going to happen to him," she said. "I can't explain why, but I was positive of it. So positive that I finally decided to phone and warn him."

"Have you ever experienced this feeling of impending tragedy before?" Whitehead asked her.

Gwen Hadley acknowledged that she had. She was, in a way, a modern version of the Trojan princess Cassandra of Greek mythology who was given the gift of prophecy by Apollo—a gift which became a curse because no one would believe her.

The only child of a prosperous middle-class family, she had been born in Salisbury, a charming old provincial town dominated by a towering cathedral. She had a normal

childhood, no psychic experiences as she grew up, and after graduating from a business school she obtained a position in the bank where she moved about in a matter-of-fact atmosphere. Her friends, like her business associates, were rather conservative and there was no one in her personal life to stimulate an interest in psychic phenomena.

"I never believed in spiritualism, fortune-telling, clairvoyance, mental telepathy or anything of that nature.

"My first experience occurred a few years ago when I was at a beauty salon sitting under a dryer and idly scanning through a newspaper. I noticed that there was to be a showing of prize cattle in the Cotswolds on the following day, something in which I did not have the slightest interest.

"It was after I put the paper aside that I had a sudden feeling of alarm. I told myself that someone, I did not know who, would be gored to death by an angry bull.

"The feeling was so intense that after leaving the beauty salon I almost decided to phone the officials in the Cotswolds and warn them of the danger. Then I realized how utterly absurd this would sound to anyone who answered the telephone."

Later that day, according to Gwen Hadley, the feeling of impending tragedy left her. She did not think about it again until two days later and read that William McPartland, 58, a gentleman farmer, had been gored and trampled to death by a prize bull which suddenly became maddened while he was exhibiting it at the Cotswold cattle fair.

McPartland had been a complete stranger to Gwen Hadley. She had never even heard his name before.

"But," she said, "I have learned since then that no matter how ridiculous it might have seemed I should have tried to telephone a warning. Perhaps I might have prevented the tragedy."

Several months went by. Gwen Hadley had all but forgotten about the incident. Then there was a series of storms throughout England. High winds accompanying the driving rains had caused severe damage in the Oxford-Stratford-Chester area.

Gwen Hadley heard the news on her radio. She had

a sudden feeling that a tragedy was imminent. "Chester" was the first thought to come to her mind. Then a man climbing a pole and a vivid flash of lightning. A second man was climbing the pole, reaching upward to touch the first—

Gwen Hadley put through a call to the telephone company in Chester and was relieved when a voice answered.

"Your telephone wires are all right, thank God."

"Yes, madam. Whom did you wish to speak to?"

"No one, really. Wait—"

Again she had that ominous feeling.

"Have your electric lines been damaged?"

"Some of them have been blown down, madam. They will be restrung on the poles in the morning."

"Please telephone the electric company immediately. Tell them to make certain that all electric power is shut off before permitting anyone to climb the poles. Otherwise two men will be electrocuted."

"The electric company always takes maximum precautions." The man at the telephone company sounded both reassuring and puzzled. He was certain that he was dealing with some unusual kind of female crackpot. He had no intention of passing along so obvious a warning.

On the following day several repair crews rehung the fallen wires and the current was turned on—prematurely. One man, Curtis Lowndes, 34, was still on a crosstree stringing a power line. William Girard, 28, his helper, stood at the base of the pole.

Lowndes reached out to raise a sagging wire. As he touched it there was a vivid blue-white flash which seemed to leap into his hand. The current surged through his body, which writhed and twitched. He died quickly and the sickening odor of burning flesh emanated from his corpse.

Girard reacted automatically. Without thinking of the possible consequence he climbed the pole and grabbed Lowndes' dangling arm. As he made contact the current shot through his body and he, too, was instantly killed.

Gwen Hadley was grief-stricken when she read about the double tragedy. "The man I spoke to on the telephone didn't believe me," she said. "He didn't give my message to the power company."

There were two other tragic episodes in which she had the uncanny "feeling" presaging the death of strangers.

One occurred on a June day in 1967 when she phoned the principal of a day school in the Lake District of Keswick and warned him that on the following day one of his students would be drowned.

The principal refused to take her seriously. All students, he informed her, were under constant and close supervision.

On the following afternoon, during soccer practice a student, named Charles Keough, fourteen years old, wandered away to a nearby brook. Somehow he lost his footing on the muddy bank and, in falling, hit his head against a rock, which knocked him unconscious. By the time his absence was discovered, less than a quarter of an hour later, he had been drowned—in less than a foot of water.

In the other incident, which occurred in May, 1968, Gwen Hadley had a "feeling" that impelled her to telephone the operator of a bus tours organization in London which had booked a tour of the Shakespeare country. The manager of the agency hung up on her in indignation when she tried to warn him.

The bus, with twenty-three passengers, was approaching Stratford-on-Avon when a rainstorm greatly reduced visibility and it ran into the rear of a big truck stalled partly on the shoulder of the highway. One passenger, Marjorie Evans, a twenty-year-old university student, was killed. Eight others and the driver, Herbert Dawson, were injured seriously enough to require hospitalization.

Gwen Hadley cannot adequately explain the origin of her mysterious "feeling" nor why, among millions of people, she should single out particular individuals who are invariably strangers.

"In the instance of the young student who was drowned the word 'Keswick' and then 'day school' seemed to just pop into my mind," she told Dr. Richard Berdine, the well known British psychic investigator. "I had no foreknowledge of the victim himself, no inkling of his name until I read about the tragedy."

In the case of the fatal bus accident the association was only a little less obscure.

"I read an advertisement for the tour," she explained, "I thought to myself that it would be nice to take a short holiday and visit Stratford-on-Avon. Then suddenly I felt that there would be a bus crash and someone would be killed. I hoped that my telephoned warning would prevent it, but the warning was ignored—just as my others have been.

Dr. Berdine and other psychic investigators who have examined Gwen Hadley admit they are mystified by her bizarre extrasensory perception.

"Hers is the most unusual case among the many I have investigated in twenty-one years," Dr. Berdine declares. "I have determined to my own satisfaction that every instance she related to me was true.

"Miss Hadley does not regard herself as clairvoyant. She cannot explain her psychic 'feeling.' Far from considering it a gift, she regards it as a curse, because no recipient of her well-meant warning ever believes her."

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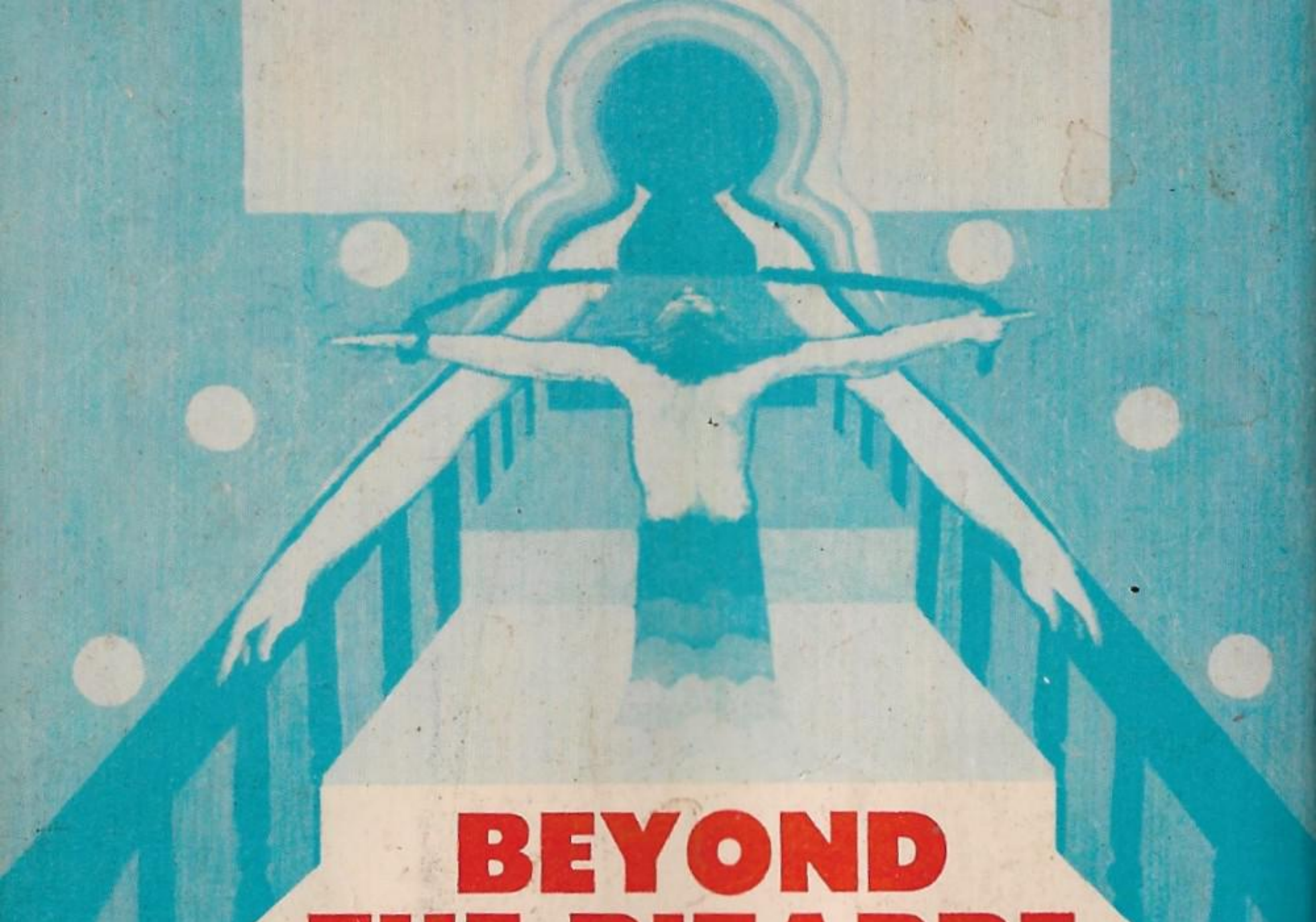

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